



Heroes and Celebrities in Central and Eastern Europe

Ed. by István Povedák

HEROES AND CELEBRITIES
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

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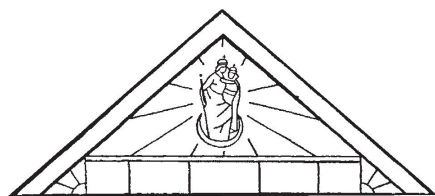
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Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology

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FROM HEROES TO CELEBRITIES. Problems of definition and potential solutions¹

The words *hero* and *star* are closely tied and are frequently used as synonyms, which are present in everyday conversation and have long been at the centre of research, but it still cannot be said that they each refer to distinct groups of people that can be clearly defined. The essence of this is that while the word *hero* can be clearly defined in traditional folklore (folk tales and legends) as well as in the works of contemporary popular culture (cinema, literature etc.) in reference to central figures in stories endowed with positive or negative characteristics that also represent the ideal character of a particular community, whose features and life trajectories can be easily analysed,² heroes in contemporary culture are a great deal more difficult to capture. Nowadays, everyday conversation tends to define as heroes a number of people that fall under various categories without identifying any kind of heroic characteristic traits (e.g. courage and self-sacrifice) in the particular individuals. As a result, they define contemporary stars and celebrities as heroes, but they also refer to people in particular jobs (e.g. firefighters and paramedics) as heroes. This mixed use results from imprecise language use, conflation of the words in the media, and basic shortcomings in the scholarly literature on the subject. Indeed, while the heroes in legends and folktales are clearly characterised by heroic features, it is not easy to say the same for stars, even if it seems that way. After all, while the scholarly literature attempts to offer various definitions of the word *star*, their emergence and the various types – moreover, some even attempt to collect various typical attributes of stars and their underlying value systems – the majority of them fail to define the comparative factors based on which their distinction and definition become possible not on their own, deriving from themselves, but in relation to other concepts with similar content. These attempts result in imprecise, conflated, superficial definitions of stars, not merely as famous people and central figures in the news – because this is only a partial reality. This only uses the concept of star as an attribute which is inappropriate for a deeper analysis of the underlying content. It is true that a basic criterion of stardom is fame, but fame itself does not create stars. We cannot call someone a star merely because he or she is famous. Indeed, if this were the case, practically every known politician, including prime ministers and finance ministers, could be called stars, which in the majority of cases is not the case. The word *star* as a noun should be separated from the attributive usage since this category covers significantly more. In this sense, it conceals the Latin word *celeber*, which

1 The research was supported by the OTKA NK81502 project and the MTA-SZTE Research Group for the Study of Religious Culture.

2 Campbell 1993.

does not merely refer to fame, but also to the moment, in which a huge crowd celebrates, exalts, and deifies the hero. Besides fame, a basic criterion is that he or she has a lasting impact on the community; that is a group emerges from out of the community that knows his or her character, that also recognises him or her and translates its respect to deeds. This, that is respect that can be captured in actions, is called a cult. The definition of the size of the crowd necessary to justify the existence of the cult is incidental, as is the time span necessary for one to separate from the celestoids or "bubble celebrities",³ whose most important feature is that the camp that knows them increases at an unbelievable scale, and then they pop and disappear after a short period of success. This latter category also implies that the basis for the fame is not (or not necessarily) one's knowledge or other individual abilities, but an image created artificially by the media which has become integral to the world of ideas among consumers (readers and viewers). As Boorstin has also noted, "the celebrity is a person who is known for his well-knownness".⁴ This implication does not rule out that the person declared to be a celebrity may produce a truly valuable contribution to society; it merely refers to the fact that this product is not necessary.

These characteristics, however, are by far not sufficient to define stars since it is a well-known fact, as Hankiss also notes, that the famous, that is people who are known by many and who perhaps also have been surrounded by a charismatic aura by rank, power, money, or some great, special achievement, existed in traditional societies as well. These heroes were surrounded by a number of customs and carefully composed ceremonies and rites and ultimately a myth-making imagination, elevating them to heights above humanity.⁵ At this point, one may ask: what is the factor that separates heroes from stars? Indeed, upon comparing the two categories the difference between them may seem to be insignificant at first sight. Are they truly a manifestation of the same phenomenon and need in different ages?

Researchers on the cult of stardom agree that the star phenomenon basically appeared in tandem with the emergence of the mass media, and then they endeavoured to determine with great passion through thorough argumentation and a review of sources exactly in which century and which decade and in connection with which mass communication genre all this might have taken place.⁶ As Boorstin has put it, "For us, however, 'celebrity' means primarily a person – 'a

³ A celestoid is a famous person whose fame is only the result of his or her presence in the media and stays known only as long as the media keeps the person in the centre. It is "a media-generated, compressed, concentrated form of attributed celebrity" Rojek 2001: 18.

The term "bubble celebrity" was used by Podjed to signify a person who has suddenly become extremely popular through social networking sites and who disappears from the communal memory without a trace once communication about them stops. For more detail, see his study in this volume.

⁴ Boorstin 1982: 57.

⁵ Elemér Hankiss mentions as examples the ancient heroes, the Christian saints, god-kings, aristocrats, popes, and high priests along with famous generals, feared adventurers, rebels, and folk heroes, such as Roland, Joan of Arc, Don Juan, Savonarola, and Till Eulenspiegel. Naturally, the list may be expanded with Hungarian names as well. Hankiss 2002: 105.

⁶ Rojek (2001) and Gamson (1992) basically tied it to the movie industry, while Buda (1994) links it to the press of the 18th and 19th centuries.

person of celebrity'. This usage of the word significantly dates from the early years of the Graphic Revolution, the first example being about 1850. Emerson spoke of 'the celebrities of wealth and fashion' (1848). Now American dictionaries define a celebrity as a 'famous or well-publicized person'. The celebrity in the distinctive modern sense could not have existed in any earlier age, or in America before the Graphic Revolution. The celebrity is a person who is known for his well-knownness."⁷

While this is essential, it does not provide any explanation for various factors or may even lead one astray. One, if we accept the supposition that the previous appearance of the mass media created this category, then logically it would follow that there were no stars earlier and that heroes will cease to exist in future, which is obviously false since the two phenomena existed and still exist in an overlapping manner. If we take this to its logical conclusion, we may wonder to what extent opinions on two famous personalities differ only because one has become popular by word of mouth and the other through written sources. Moreover, Boorstin also points to a false notion that the visual turn has pushed out the oral flow of information, a shift which has not happened to date and probably never will. Furthermore, if we examine the contemporary cult of heroes more carefully, we can find a number of examples of historical figures, whose popularity has been maintained or has (re-)emerged as a result of the mass media as well as stars who have become popular primarily not through the mass media but initially independent of it; this popularity has emerged because of who the stars were, and the mass media has engulfed it only afterwards. The presence of channels of mass communication does not mean, therefore, that the category of hero has disappeared and been replaced by stardom exclusively. The cult of heroes – be they historical heroes, writers, poets etc. – has continued to exist side by side with the cult of stars, although its popularity, active presence in popular culture, and power to shape identity have been gradually decreasing. Stars practically marginalize heroes from everyday or folk culture and exile them to high culture. All this is part of the process which maintains or causes the separation and emergence of folk and high cultures in tandem with the appearance of mass culture as a result of the emergence of mass communication. While in previous periods, however, numerous elements of high culture continually filtered down to folk culture, and the folklorized elements of high culture were integral and inseparable elements of folk culture, by today this relationship is far more superficial and the two types of cultures are increasingly turning away from each other and even rejecting one another.

Similarly, locating the essence of star culture within the typology of stars leads to no result either, since the different types of stars contribute to differences in the cult that emerges among them because the various groups that like a particular Hollywood actor or a footballer with the body of a fashion model are completely different in terms of age and culture – not to mention a singer, actor, or writer

7 Boorstin 1982: 57.

who embodied the spirit of the age or mass taste during the years of socialism.⁸ It is a key factor, therefore, to consider the specific area in which a particular person became famous when considering the manifestation of the cult since in the case of the cult of a musician or actor, imitating their look is an important feature, while this is not actually the case with political stars, who are able to shape one's worldview and cultural memory a great deal more significantly. The specialities are extremely varied – especially nowadays, when the media uses the attribute *star* in connection with everyone without any discernment (e.g. star lawyer, star broker, star hairdresser, star chef etc.) – thus it makes no sense to list these specialities, especially since they merely describe internal differences within the various types but not the complex definition of the word *star*.⁹

There is a significant difference in the way they appear. While some of the scholarly literature – rightly – emphasises that heroes appear as a result of mass needs, they express and satisfy socio-cultural needs and desires generated from the bottom up as a result of which in reality they operate as a point of orientation for the wider social milieu; the figure of the stars in most cases is created on the basis of the needs of mass culture. Although it is connected to the needs of the receiving audience, it is not fully identical with the needs of the masses. Although it is obvious that stars cannot be successfully created with a long-term cult structured around them in an entirely artificial way, despite the will of the masses, this does not mean that the masses are only able to embrace only phenomena that satisfy their own needs.¹⁰ Celebrities provide an excellent example of this since they are the precise embodiment of this process of creating needs from above. Although their short-lived success shows not only that everything can be sold in a consumer society – though only through continual renewal and other marketing techniques – but also that artificially created people become known or popular because they are outstanding and interesting in a positive way, albeit much more frequently in a negative way. However, all of this disappears once they have become known since the factor that placed them in the centre of attention also disappears.

The stars and the myths constructed around them, however, like the mediaeval exempla, express the anxiety of people in modern and postmodern societies resulting from the transformation of their society and culture along with their need to have these problems solved. All of this cannot be complete since basically all this takes place not through a pattern of solution created by the individuals

⁸ A number of examples can be mentioned here, but let us illustrate the difference between two football players, David Beckham, with his macho image that has made him the icon of contemporary mass culture, and the legendary Hungarian footballer, Öcsi Puskás, who was and has remained a national hero for Hungarians, similar to Pelé for Brazilians. Their significance in defining symbolic identities and public opinion differs significantly.

⁹ C.f. Gamson 1992, Barbas 2001, Braudy 1986.

¹⁰ This is discussed, for example, in relation to mass hysteria by Blackman and Walkerdine, who note that the masses in fact do not accept as much of what they receive as was originally presumed. They emphasise that the masses are also able to resist information received through the media or relate critically to it. They argue that the success of the media is the outcome of their compensation for all the phenomena that individuals lack in their lives. Blackman and Walkerdine 2001: 13, 50.

together; but rather they receive a pattern to follow and imitate in such a way that it suggests the false illusion that this depends on one's personal free choice as if following the pattern were the self-fulfilment of the individual and the solution to one's problems. In the meanwhile, in the case of the contemporary star cult, the possibility not to follow the star practically exists only because the individual follows something or somebody else instead, to which one also needs to adjust, therefore losing the possibility of realising one's own needs purely and overcoming one's fears.

No longer do we have the preventive communal censorship that made it possible for various folklore phenomena in traditional societies to be accepted, partially modified, or rejected; it has been replaced by a passive mode of behaviour, which only offers the appearance of activity. In this sense, the star cult and its recent superficial branch, the celebrity cult, is nothing other than a pseudo-event, a true simulacrum.¹¹ That is, it is based on the prior forms of an earlier phenomenon and its function and role in the structure of popular culture are similar, but the functions and characteristics of the original phenomenon have never managed to adapt in their totality.

Another difference between the two categories is that, besides the different channels of acquiring knowledge, the method is also different. While during the periods preceding the emergence of mass communication, heroes were first local heroes and their cult spread from this small community through word of mouth, stars in modernity or postmodernity, thanks to means of mass communication, appear immediately before a wide audience. Their cult, therefore, (usually) does not originate in the local.

In connection with the depth of the cult, we can find interesting but in many cases overtly superficial and emotional analyses, some of which look at the star cult as a religious phenomenon, something that has partly replaced religion as it has lost its significance. It has filled the void, and therefore it is seen as a quasi-, pseudo-, or para-religious phenomenon, a religion substitute. In agreement with Rojek, Cashmore has observed the following: "Celebrities appear as gods in human form or simulacra of departed deities. Celebrity culture, in this view, becomes a functional equivalent of religion, with beliefs and practices associated with religion 'converging' with those of celebrity culture".¹² A shared feature of these analyses is that they attempt to establish a parallel between the so-called institutionalized religions, especially their various manifestations in folk or popular religion, and the dimensions of adoration, characteristic of the star cult,¹³ in such a way that they use religious terminology to describe the star cult by focusing on a few similar characteristic features. This is how stars become gods and saints,¹⁴

11 On the simulacra, see Baudrillard (1996) in more detail. In his monograph, Chidester (2005) interprets as fake a number of phenomena in popular culture that also demonstrate religious functions on the subcultural level.

12 Cashmore 2006: 253.

13 For example, Doss 1999, Doss 2008 and Ward 2011.

14 Ward 2011.

attendance at concerts and funerals or visits to their graves become pilgrimages,¹⁵ and posters of them become icons. There are very few studies, however, that deal with the differences beyond the superficial similarities¹⁶ and analyse which religious dimension can indeed be recognised in the star cult and to what extent it can be recognised.¹⁷ That is, can a star cult in any form truly be identified as a religion? Does it satisfy functional conditions associated with the definition of religion? Or does it much rather refer to a social behavioural form which reveals similarities with religion and the cult of saints in some areas and with the cult of heroes in others? At any rate, the definition of the star cult is aided by its comparison with religion because these authors do not wish to define it as a phenomenon in its own right.

The cult of heroes, stars, and celestoids provides a very powerful demonstration of different manifestations beyond all this. The hero cult is structured primarily around identity and thus manifested on the level of thinking and feeling (e.g. memory and respect) and related actions, primarily in rites tied to remembrance. Although one of the most important dimensions of manifestation in the case of modern stars is identity, there is a much stronger focus on the external patterns of action – which can be, for example, an imitation of the lifestyle and look of the star or pilgrimages related to them etc. – than on the internal, emotional level. The spirit of the consumer society can be captured in an attitude of enjoyment which pushes the more essential, internal elements of identity into the background. At the same time, it can be clearly seen that in the case of the star cult the elements of action often show a closer connection to a kind of pseudo-religious attitude as a result of which the adoration that emerges around the figure of the star may take forms similar to the cult of a saint. All this, however, embraces only a smaller segment of identity, and, in a significant portion of cases, it is unfit to offer solutions to essential questions related to self-identity, worldview, existence, and ways of thinking. The celebrity cult reaches beyond all this in that it lacks any kind of pattern of internal identity; it no longer functions as a point of orientation and remains on the level of frivolous entertainment of the *carpe diem* type.

The most important difference, however, can be detected in the different base structure of the hero and star cults. This difference is similar to that between following tradition and following fashion. On the surface, similarity is created through following or imitating something, but the important content on a deeper level is different. In the case of tradition, we can identify community values, while in fashion it is individual values. In following tradition, individuals also maintain and adapt it to their current circumstances, but in the process they are not performing an individual series of actions. This is partly because following tradition in the majority of cases has taken place in communal spaces; the individual represented his own personal and communal identity in one, and the community

15 This phenomenon is examined in detail in Margry (2008), in which the authors in the volume use the term *secular pilgrimage*.

16 Hopgood 2005.

17 Povedák 2011: 182-190.

confirmed the individual. Moreover, in all cases, tradition is a symbolic storehouse of the values, knowledge, enervation, and information necessary for survival. In connection with that, while the emergence, actions, and evolving cult tied to historical heroes basically occur under circumstances which push community values into the foreground – that is, the historical heroes engage in their individual deeds in the interests of the community and the people – the entire existence of the stars is rooted in individualism. While we cannot meet a hero that has become a hero because he has achieved self-actualization by placing himself in the centre of attention, we can list numerous heroes who have pushed themselves and their personal desires, aims, and interests into the background and acted and suffered for others. Heroes, therefore, can never be understood on their own, only as members of a community, as symbolic embodiments of that community, and therefore serve as models for community identification. In contrast, the star cult is closely tied to some sort of a particular middle-class mythology that centres on individual success. The essence of its mythical element is that it represents the success of the market leaders as if this success were possible without alienation and thus legitimates the entire system of mass culture on the level of a global world order. It offers a false image that provides compensation for the ordinary person following the star that makes him believe that the trajectory and the situation of the star is available for him; that is, it provides an individual pattern of identification, while it is the illusion of the reality that can be achieved.¹⁸

Besides differences in the base structure, an essential difference is expressed in Boorstin's thesis, which states that "we can fabricate fame, we can at will (though usually at considerable expense) make a man or woman well-known; but we cannot make him great. We can make a celebrity, but we can never make a hero. In a now-almost-forgotten sense, all heroes are self-made. Celebrity worship and hero worship should not be confused."¹⁹ The hero cult and the star cult cannot be used as each other's metaphors, but, in light of all this, the question arises whether we are dealing with the manifestation of the same phenomenon in different periods, that is whether the differences or similarities are more powerful and decisive or whether are they only linked on the basis of fame.

18 Baudrillard 1996.

19 Boorstin 1982: 48.

	HERO	STAR	CELETOID
Feature	Famous	Famous	Famous
Method of attaining this feature	Becomes famous spontaneously	Becomes famous through the mass media	Becomes famous through the mass media
Motivations and needs	Fame created through mass demand	Created personalities in general	Created personalities
Social embeddedness	National perception	Popular to varying degrees at a subcultural level, little national perception	Popular at a subcultural level, "unpopularly famous"
Effect on society	The hero cult manifests itself in people's thinking and emotions (e.g. commemoration and reverence).	Action generally plays a relatively strong role in the star cult, e.g. imitation of externals, though it is also apt to trigger emotional responses.	The celeb cult consists almost exclusively of action. It triggers superficial emotions (repulsion or attraction).
Duration of cult	A long-lasting cult, as long as several centuries	Short-term cult of no more than a few decades	Generally nine days' wonders
Depth of cult	A complete mythology is developed around it (including hero motifs).	Mythological elements may emerge around the star.	Tabloids
Underlying value system	Actions performed by them amid circumstances tied to a focus on community values are explained in terms of the interests of the community, or the "people"	The star's entire existence is generally rooted in the soil of individualism, with fame generally achieved for him- or herself.	Complete individualism, perhaps a negative, destructive, anti-social value system as well.

Chart 1. Heroes, stars, and celebs: A comparative characterology

This picture is shaded further by the fact that classical researchers of the star cult are tied to the Western cultural realm and proceed from its associated features, but the operation of post-socialist societies is somewhat different. One of the reasons for this is that the officially communicated value system of the communist and socialist dictatorships basically rejected hedonism and the central role of consumerism. They had an ambivalent relationship to the stars themselves since they primarily constructed cults around political leaders and they sacralised them (in a cult of personality). Popular people not tied to politics, therefore, could have become dangerous, as a result of which it was strictly regulated who could become popular and how. This type of central control and censorship, however, created famous people that were different from those in the West, a fact which could be observed well, for example, in music, where, for instance, the lifestyle, liberalism, spiritual awakening, relationship with the green movement, and anti-political attitude of the Western hippie movement were thoroughly missing in the general populace here. If such bands existed, they were part of the underground

subculture.²⁰ Naturally, these stars did not disappear with the political changes but survived the age, and their legacy is still detectable. This sort of legacy produces stars who are completely incomprehensible for representatives of Western culture and are practically unsellable in the West.²¹

Moreover, the degree of ambivalence in these post-socialist societies in their relation to their historical heroes and the extent of the superficiality of their knowledge of them perhaps stem from this ambivalent legacy. This is partly a result of the fact that the communist and socialist systems only supported a national identity to a limited extent,²² preferring internationalism instead. These political systems created their own heroes, which developed alongside and partly instead of the pantheon of national heroes. They selected from among historical heroes based on conscious political arguments, elevating some of them and providing them with certain schematic marks, while dooming others to being forgotten. The impact of all this appears significantly in the transformation of national identity and development after the political changes. The reconstructions of national identity and the cul de sacs of the reconstruction of national identity are closely tied, therefore, to the cult of historical heroes.

Our conference in Szeged, Hungary, focused on this phenomenon in the autumn of 2011. It was the first conference to deal with the hero and star cults in post-socialist societies. Like every pioneering initiative, this was not perfect either and did not provide a complete picture of the phenomenon. However, we hope that it will not be these childhood illnesses that determine the image evoked in the reader, but rather that this undertaking will serve as the basis for an ongoing process.

20 Klaniczay 2003.

21 Povedák 2008.

22 Brubaker 1997.

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HERO AND ANTI-HERO IN THE CONSUMER SOCIETY AND THE TOTALITARIAN STATES. Philosophical-Anthropological Analysis

Not once Western democracy has been opposed to the Soviet Union and Nazi regime as kingdom of freedom, to the “the empire of the evil” and, accordingly, consumer society to the centralized and controlled economy. USSR under Stalin and Germany under Hitler have been considered as classical samples of totalitarianism and prototypes of the anti-utopian states in the writings like Orwellian 1984. Concepts of hero and anti-hero pose important place in this discourse as well in the approach to a man in the 20th century in the whole.

Meanwhile we would like to note despite the fact the consumerism has been used mainly as metaphor of the postmodern society first of all in its western version, in wide sense definition “society of consuming and entertainment” can be attributed to the Soviet society in some degree as well. We can remember not only 1920s years, NEP, when various forms of private initiative were permitted, but further decades. Except, possibly, but not surely, most grimy of them – the thirties (because of total terror) and the fortieth (because of the Second World War). But not only Ilf and Petrov in their novels *The Twelve Chairs* (1927) and *The Little Golden Calf* (1931) and Mikhail Zoshchenko in his sketches satirized various social vices of the Soviet citizens including their desire to material comfort and financial welfare but Mikhail Bulgakov in his famous novel *The Master and Margarita* (1929-1940, firstly printed 1966) mocked at the Soviet cultural elite and their not literal appetites. In the novel *Torgsin*, accessible for happy possessors of currency, and *Griboyedov’s House*, accessible for proprietors of writer certifications are representative islands of consumption in the Soviet way. Here nonconformist, intellectual and creative person appears like a jester and alienated individual. During the period after post-war Soviet society, especially its nomenclature elite, moved towards this direction and it became one of the fatal factors for USSR.

In Z. Bauman’s opinion, “consuming is a permanent and irremovable condition and aspect of life, bound by neither time nor history; one of the inseparable elements of biological survival which we, humans, share with all other living organisms.”¹ So, consumerism can be considered as form of identity. Ordering goods from the store replaces the interaction with neighbours. Thus there is a “reduction” of the Other. Consumption acts as a form of insurance, collective responsibility and collective participation, protection from poverty rather than selfishness. Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood think “what we call consumption

1 Bauman 2007: 25.

rituals are the normal marks of friendship."² But we are not only friends but persons responsible for many things. Consumption is a bridge between the economy and "very active branch of anthropology which has concentrated on individual transactions"³ and proposes an anthropological account of social environments and their effect on saving. Douglas and Isherwood propose an anthropological approach to the world of goods and the consumer society but combined with sociological analysis. "Goods are now to be seen as medium, less objects of desire than threads of a veil that disguises the social relation under it."⁴

Baudrillard notes the shift from heroes of manufacturing to the heroes of consumption. Consumption is the intermediate link between production and dying things. Consumer society needs the destruction of things. Consumption destroys interpersonal communication. Showcases embody the image of the gift, holiday, devoid of ritual and sacred meaning. Pleasure becomes a duty. Consumption has become "a powerful element of social control (by the atomization of consuming individuals), but that very fact it brings with it a need for ever greater bureaucratic constraint on the processes of consumption – which will as a consequence be exalted more and more energetically as the realm of freedom."⁵ "If the consumer society no longer produces myth, this is because *it is itself its own myth*."⁶ Like any great myth consumption has its discourse and critical anti-discourse. The study of the consumer society and its critics from inside have become one of the manifestations of turn to the everyday life in the postmodern situation.

Baudrillard calls the system of cultural connotations, defining the discursive contours of the consumer society as *totalitarian*. The body has been an instrument of pleasure and indicator of prestige. "The consumer society is at one and the same time a society of solicitude and a society of repression, a pacified society and a society of violence."⁷ Today violence has been integrated into everyday life. Violence is a way out of the state of anguish provoked by the inability to fully adapt desire to the principle of need and utility. Fatigue can be interpreted "as a response on the part of the modern man – a response in the form of a passive refusal – to his conditions of existence. But it has to be seen that this 'passive refusal' is in fact a *latent violence*, and that it is, by this token, only one possible response, the others being responses of overt violence."⁸ So, as we can mark next argument, totalitarianism cannot be attributed to the Soviet and Nazi regimes and some else exclusively. It is more wide metaphor as well and, possibly, it's one of the most powerful modern myths. Very important category that defines for western intellectuals mental parameters of this consumption society is social alienation. According to Melvin Seeman model of alienation consists of

2 Douglas 1996: xxii.

3 Douglas 1996: 21.

4 Douglas 1996: 152.

5 Baudrillard 1998: 84.

6 Baudrillard 1998: 193.

7 Baudrillard 1998: 174.

8 Baudrillard 1998: 182.

five aspects: powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, social isolation, and self-estrangement.⁹ Later Seeman added a sixth element, cultural estrangement, although this last have not considered a lot in later discussions of Seeman's work. E. Erikson assumes that "totalitarianism is based on universal human potentialities and is thus related to all aspects of human nature."¹⁰

It was already Alexis de Tocqueville who saw the dangers and contradictions of democracy. M. Halberstam supposes the logic of totalitarianism as related to the logic of the modern ideal of emancipation, as culmination of the modernism's crisis, and the result of rationalization and instrumentalization of culture and society. "... totalitarianism represents the culmination of a modern historical trend towards the elimination of the political."¹¹ Totalitarian movements "have presented their project not as utopian, but as giving concrete individuals a way of understanding their concrete lives."¹² Halberstam distinguishes between totalitarianism as an idea of liberalism and the self-understanding of totalitarian movements. "The image of totalitarianism harbors within certain truths and contradictions inherent in the liberal idea of politics and in the modern conception of the autonomous subject which liberalism places at the center of its world."¹³ Totalitarianism represents an escape from loneliness and at the same time an escape from reality and even more, loss of reality and emancipation from meaning. Totalitarian movements signalize the culmination of alienation. Permanent violence, obvious and latent, strengthens this tendency. It keeps society in tension and destroys private life.

H. Arendt distinguishes among the origins of totalitarianism anti-Semitism, imperialism, racial way of thinking before racism itself, the decline of nation-states. So, in general, totalitarianism is a product of the Western civilization. Its main features, according to Arendt, are the destruction of all social and family ties; the atomization of society; union of crowd and the elite; propaganda; use of elite structures that are separate from the real world; the shadow, the real power and the façade; the total mutual suspicion and provocation; the reduction of human being to a set of reactions, and finally, "murder of the moral person in man. This is done in the main by making martyrdom, for the first time in history, impossible."¹⁴ Fortitude in the face of death is being deprived of its social importance, and therefore is becoming meaningless. The anonymity of death in the concentration camp means the anonymity of life, denial of the existence, and the killing of human individuality. Total terror subordinates human it to "the law of the movement of some suprahuman force, Nature or History."¹⁵ Human being is becoming instrument of these forces which lead to absurd isolation and loneliness without meaningful solitude.

9 Seeman 1959.

10 Erikson 1964: 159.

11 Halberstam 1999: 11.

12 Halberstam 1999: 59.

13 Halberstam 1999: 119.

14 Arendt 1958: 451.

15 Arendt 1958: 465.

Romantic heroes are weak and lonely. The Jacobins' exposure of the gods led to impossibility of god-like heroic models. As a result, "the nineteenth century lost faith in the very possibility of heroes and heroism. Consequently, neither they nor we have effective epics or tragedies."¹⁶ Thomas Carlyle supposed, veneration of heroes is "the germ of Christianity itself". "The greatest of all Heroes is One – whom we do not name here!"¹⁷ Death of God means the death of heroes. Desacralized hero represents a subjective morality, devoid of religious support in the moral consciousness and determined by family, street, nation. The hero makes the good that is necessary for them (family, streets, etc.). Western society has tacitly sanctioned the creation of the anti-hero's image. USSR posed a sacred model, supported by a cult of hero, mainly a revolutionary, soldier, etc.

Benjamin L. Alpers notes that even the French Revolution 1789-1799 in many ways anticipated the development of modern dictatorships.¹⁸ Alpers has revealed specific appeal to the dictatorship in America in the 1930s: "American cultural producers questioned the ability of democracy to function in a modern society."¹⁹ In *The Great Dictator* the power of the dictator was represented almost entirely as function of his relationship to the mass communication.

We should say some of the totalitarian due ingredients are shared by the consumer society. Of course, the consumer society is not so powerful and consecutive towards violation of freedom and human rights. Nevertheless it happens although in indirect way. Habermas and other representatives of the Frankfurt School in Philosophy even applied the word *totalitarian* to the Western lifestyle. Secondly, cultivation of idols figures in the sphere of the cultural, social and everyday life and especially among politicians is less possible because of many-centuries liberal mechanisms. This is some kind of guarantee of human rights including right to fantasy and wondering in the consumer totality. While the totalitarian states are almost deprived of the entertainment western democratic society transformed it into industry of huge scale. Industry of entertainment cultivated not only movie stars, like Marilyn Monroe, or The Beatles, but some political leaders as, for example, J.F. Kennedy. We don't think they were heroes. Possibly, they were idols for certain social groups or even for whole generations but were criticized in some issues by their opponents and rivals. Western culture searched heroes rather in the past (genre of peplum) but in present it was ruled by liberal ideas of the Open Society and civil rights. Here political leaders are under the permanent pressure and control. We can remember scandals with R. Nixon, W.J. Clinton, Bushisms' editions in the open press etc. Political leaders and sportsmen were postulated as heroes by society and themselves mainly at definite moments of their achievements and triumphs. It's hard to sustain both interest and admiration to their lives for a while. But as long it has been possible they have played role of celebrities.

16 Pasco 1997: 89.

17 Pasco 1997: 18.

18 Alpers 2003: 2.

19 Alpers 2003: 39.

Celebrities became new phenomenon in the 20th century's culture. Not only the personages from public life, show business, and journalism have become the earliest and most widespread celebrities, but the media itself do have become a powerful tool for creating the new celebrities far from show-business in their professional activities. Radio and television have contributed to the popularity of Eisenhower; because of media effect, Kennedy became a star long before his tragic death. From the information "who, what, where" the media interest has turned to information about the private lives and hobbies of politicians and pop stars. As D. Hurley notes "it is not so much that Americans have not had heroes, but during the past few decades, American heroes came to be replaced by 'mere celebrities'."²⁰ At the same time celebrities can be satirized unlike to idols or heroes.

In general hero embodies male vision but the 20th century lead to destroying of this stereotype. For example, *The silence of the Lambs* is the quest of a female hero. "Separation from her usual milieu"²¹ has been the first stage of the hero's journey. In C. Gill's opinion, "the term 'hero' is radically ambiguous in contemporary usage, designating both a figure who was a special status in her society (or someone who is a member of a special type of society, namely a 'heroic' one), and a figure who has a special status within a work of art, the 'hero' of the story."²² S. Hook reduces hero to leader in his milieu and analyses not genius itself but his/her influence on history and art. In other words, Hook means cultural heroes. "This assumption is that the towering figures of literature, music, painting, philosophy, and science have also been the decisive figures in world history – political, social, and economic."²³ According to L. Hughes-Hallett's the same criterion, heroes are "people who have been considered by their contemporaries to be so exceptionally gifted as to be capable of something momentous – the defeat of an enemy. The salvation of a race, the completion of a voyage – which no one else could have accomplished."²⁴ Moreover, "hero worship still plays a ritual part in our political lives."²⁵

At the same time totalitarian regimes produced a lot of heroes. The New Man image in the Third Reich and the Soviet Union was outlined as secular figure, correlated neither with religion nor morality. In Nazi Germany accent was made on the body while as in USSR ideology formed complete image dominating over whole human being. Maxim Gorky considered heroism and collectivism as two features necessary for New Man. "Every individual was a potential hero, had an inborn fullness of life, strength and beauty, which were realized by mobilizing the will and serving a larger, transindividual whole: society, humanity, or the course of history."²⁶ The Soviet literature played central role in this process. Stalin called on leading Soviet writers to work as "engineers of human souls". Coal miners, tractor drivers, aviators have been new heroes – all of them were "in dialogue

20 West 2003: 12.

21 Izod 2001: 108.

22 Gill 2002: 98.

23 Hook 2008: 38.

24 Hughes-Hallett 2004: 3.

25 Hughes-Hallett 2004: 13.

26 Fitzpatrick 2009: 308.

with technology."²⁷ Rufus W. Mathewson marks "the Soviet model hero lives and acts within the confines of an infallible doctrine promising certain success in the public domain, whatever the private cost. The survivor-hero generates his moral strength out of his own personal resources in conditions of solitude and unrelenting adversity."²⁸ Only in its most grim versions like Orwellian one totalitarian regime represents collectivism without any sign or moreover propaganda of heroism.

In the anti-utopia central character acts as hero who confronts totalitarianism. At the same time he/she is anti-hero for this system itself and for those regimes which were satirized in this way. He/she is sacrificed often in physical or (and) mental sense. This sacral violence gains ritual character. In our opinion, this phenomenon can be explained on the basis of Girard's theory about sacrificial crisis and scapegoat. Sacrificial crisis, by R. Girard's definition, is "simply another form of that knowledge which grows greater as the reciprocal violence grows more intense but which never leads to the whole truth. It is the knowledge of violence, along with the violence itself, that the act of expulsion succeeds in shunting outside realm of consciousness."²⁹ If the anti-utopian sacrificial protagonist comes to the truth about essence and an initial origin of sacred violence too closely, the ruling elite can even help to open slightly some secrets and riddles, to lead along a spiritual labyrinth, but only in order finally to extort an alien body from itself with acquired tragic knowledge. The theme of a victim and sacrificial violence feeds Greek tragedy, which resulted from Dionysian ecstasy. Naturally, the anti-utopia is much closer to the tragic type of narrative than utopia. The expellee from anti-utopia is a person, but his/her personal existence becomes a heavy and tragic burden under which his/her earthly life has broken down into the pieces in a process of complete spiritual comprehension.

The external person, group or nation plays the role of the victim. The constant but moderate violence directed outside and perceived as natural, supports the anti-utopia's existence. Disclosing the sacrificial crisis' secret and the secularisation of the mythological space of the anti-utopia may provoke violence that is inverted against the carrier of the protest and doubt. It can destroy the community's stability. As utopia is transforming into the theocratic state, violence becomes more and more sacred. The memory about initial violence replaced by scapegoat's ritual has been restored in some religious ceremonies.

Apotheosis of the sacral violence is a war. It's open space for both heroism and anti-heroism. Deformation of heroism in anti-utopia in much degree has depended on the phenomenon of the modern war. The transformation of the war in the new epoch was noted already by the beginning of the last century. For example, Russian philosopher N. Berdyaev in essay *The Will to Life and the Will to Culture* (1922) stressed that the war has been an extreme domination of society over the

27 Fitzpatrick 2009: 321.

28 Mathewson 1975: xvi.

29 Girard 2005: 144.

person and profanation of the chivalrous war.³⁰ Later the similar idea became one of the main points in *Homo ludens* (1938) by J. Huizinga. Rapid growth of military technology and the erosion of fundamental moral principles, in his opinion, devaluated the idea of military law and honest competition and reflected deformation of play as basis of the culture in its pervert form. K. Jaspers in his important book *The Mental Situation Of Our Age* (1931) emphasized a powerful atmosphere of open immorality and permissiveness. Jaspers meant the struggle not for beliefs, but for interests, not only the struggle of the people, but also the struggle of machines each with other and with passive population. From this point of view Mustafa Mond from A. Huxley's anti-utopia *A Brave New World* (1932) is right when he says that civilization hasn't needed more nobility and heroism.

Nevertheless militarism and aggression are essential features of the totalitarian world. The bacchanalia of death and violence has pulled out on a surface of life the infernal mechanical machine, as the Master Magus tells Robert in the novel *The City Behind the River* by G. Kasack. The huge losses on the European battlefields, especially in two terrible world wars, "had to release a place for coming revival."³¹

Robert's attempt to return the dead to life led to further collapse, but it was not able to change the course of events. In this world the temple turns in barracks and the so-called manoeuvres mean transition, intermediate condition, act of dying, retaining the echo of life at the same time. From these manoeuvres any warrior does not come back. The penetration into the real sense of war reveals absence of this sense, so it means secularisation of such values, as "struggle and courage, military brevity and contempt for death."³² Here the regular battle stages enliven the dramatic moment of various historical events that are cultivated for these feelings' support. The awful masquerade whose participants are dressed in the military uniforms of all times and peoples should show that our life is only a smooth road to death. But this motion is not the apparent end in the universe. Even the completing of all great battles never means peace.

Many anti-utopian states transform war and violence into the everyday routine forms. The anti-utopia by G. Orwell, *1984*, contains the precise theoretical reason of similar war. The book of "apostate" Emmanuel Goldstain, *The Theory and the Practice of Oligarchic Collectivism*, reveals the truth about the Ostasia's military policy. The war has undergone here strong evolution in comparison with desperate and destructive wars of the 20th century's first half. It means military actions with limited purposes. The opponents cannot destroy each other, they are not interested financially in war and they do not resist each other ideologically. Wars are not waged for markets and raw materials, but for a cheap labour force. The war seems to have *agonal* character again. Really, the hostile parties have not interfered into each other's territory; the fights have been conducted near disputable territories; the parts of them permanently pass from hands in hands. But such a war reminds one not of the tournament of noble knights, but of the fight of some

³⁰ Berdyaev 1993: 307.

³¹ Jünger 1992: 232.

³² Jünger 1882: 235.

ruminant animals, whose horns grow at such an angle that they are not able to wound each other to death.

Opportunity to capture this or that part of the disputable territories by means of a sudden treacherous manoeuvre leads to endless changes of partners. It seems that Thomas More's utopians try to suppress an enemy by their will and cunning; therefore, sometimes they resort to bribe and try to put their enemies at loggerheads. Nevertheless the bloodshed evokes in them not only disgust, but also shame. In the war between super-states in Orwell's novel such acts as violence, pillage, murders of children, conversion of all inhabitants into the slaves, reprisals against prisoners, including their cooking or buried alive, are considered as the norm and even bravery.

The anti-utopia by E. Jünger *Heliopolis* (1949) also depicts a degeneration of the military caste, though for the so-called free gunners of Orion who feel hostility to war have replaced it by the cult of hunting. In fact, it has satisfied the same human instincts and needs. The similar impression is strengthened by the depiction of Melitta's rescue from the robber who "pursued her like as the hunting animal. He needed only some jumps to catch the girl similar to a falcon catching a dove."³³ And though Lucius rescued the girl, he admits later, when telling her about ancient times, that he was tempted to participate if not in the violence, then "at least in madness storming around. There was some pleasure and unquenchable thirst at the same time."³⁴ This was similar to enjoyment of the national hero who had wiped one of the cities on the Yellow Sea from the land. "Before the crucial moment he was in the grip of a deep emotion as if he watched for some hunting animal but much stronger."³⁵

Permitting violence on the controlled territory, Landhof provokes the disturbances, which direct spontaneous destructive actions of the demos in the desirable direction and fills up the treasury, because it was permitted to pay off massacres. So, the atmosphere of violence has become nutritious for the people and Messer Grande's murder was transformed into some kind of a national holiday. The obituary was published within fifty minutes, and it clearly demonstrated that Landhof had planned this authorized sacrifice before. So, one bloody ritual becomes the prelude to another and to the last catastrophe.

Of course, postmodern society rejects similar methods of the war and violence. There are various conventions which condemn war, prohibit cruelty with prisoners of war etc. but we can see how these norms themselves can be manipulated and violated depending on the political goals and interests of the countries involved. Violence in the anti-utopian states is more obvious although more total (both physical and moral). In the information society manipulating has been more complicated and sophisticated and it can throw a man into despair even more.

Western anti-utopia reflected lack of heroism inside modern society. The same reason led to romanticizing of the new Robin Hoods as romantic heroes

33 Jünger 1992: 395.

34 Jünger 1992: 483.

35 Jünger 1992: 565.

who oppose violence of political rights and sometimes consumer society in the whole (*Enemy of the State*, *Mesrine: Public Enemy Number One* etc.). Critique of the consumer society by Jean Baudrillard and Frankfurt School strengthened this tendency. The character of the movie *Law Abiding Citizen* declares war on his offenders, among whom are hardened criminals as well as representatives from law enforcement and judicial system, the city government. The rights are violated, and in response we see violence carried out by sophisticated mechanisms and devices. In turn, the mayor do not care what laws he ignores to catch Clyde. Everyone becomes a criminal. By the end of the film District Attorney Nick Rice takes up the role of avenger. The movie *Enemy of the State* (2008) depicts society of universal espionage. It seems all state powers are directed at the absolutely innocent man to destroy his mind and his body. They are ready to anything for the sake of security which is security not for a nation or citizens but for the state and secret services. In the film *Man on Fire* (2004) the state fails to protect human rights. Similar plots evoke question: what is violence? If not only physical, violence is total and permanent in the postmodern state. It is not prerogative of the totalitarian regimes.

Soviet ideology and system in the whole became one of the direct goals of critique and satire as totalitarian model in the genre of anti-utopia. So, what are Soviet (Russian, Ukrainian) particularly features of the heroic and ant-heroic model?

First of all we suppose Orthodox culture which had outlined spiritual basis of the Kyivs'ka Rus' inherited from the antiquity not so far cult of heroes and according virtues which they embodied or, for example concepts of a person, individuality, dialogue as way to reveal truth but some philosophical ideas concentrated on the human person, his soul and wisdom etc. related to the Christianity itself. Kyivs'ka Rus' entered the medieval period much later than West European regions and hadn't experienced it in full degree including phenomenon of knighthood. Western Europe was permanent field of battles between more civilized and more barbarous peoples, between various kings, emperors, suzerains and vassals, between emperors and Pops, between Church and various heresies. The heroes were born in this battles having been added to the pantheon of the Greek heroes but they were not more God-like persons. Rather, they reminded most noble and brave heroes from Ancient Greek epic tales but embodied spirit and folk beliefs of the according European national communities. It was very wide spectrum of the heroic deeds and heroic characters. Territory of the former Kyivs'ka Rus' very soon was taken to the other states as Polish kingdom, on the one hand, and Russian empire, on the other hand. Accordingly, different parts of the modern Ukraine have not been the same not only in the sense of political, confessional, cultural factors but, let's say, towards heroes and heroism. Western Ukraine mainly shared paradigms of the European civilization in mental, confessional and cultural dimensions but it still seek for independence and saved own folk customs, beliefs and traditions in this inter-cultural space. Eastern part of the modern Ukraine during centuries was oriented to the new samples of social subordination and dominance of mono-ideas in the political thinking and Orthodox heritage. It was influenced in much degree by Russian culture, language and,

first of all, dominant idea of empire, "Third Rome". If to look at the Moscovian period of the Ukrainian history, we should admit that it would be seen lack of heroes up to the period of Napoleonic wars. By that time Russian nobility class felt more strong and self-sufficient even to oppose the emperor (Decembrist Revolt 1825). At the same time Romantic trend towards national identity revealed itself in Ukraine in the growing of the national self-consciousness and interest to the Ukrainian culture. N. Gogol attracted attention to the figure of Cossacks' leader Taras Bulba. But even Gogol softened his nationalism in the later edition of the novel. Nevertheless by the early 20th century Cossacks were finally heroised and Taras Shevchenko astonished as his spiritual heir. During 20th century heroism became political question. In the Soviet cultural place cult of heroes exposed. Pessimistic outlook was not applauded but suspected. Political figures were converted into heroes, both from the present and past (movies *Chapaev*, 1934, film about legendary Red Army commander, directed by Vasilyev brothers; *Alexander Nevsky*, 1938, directed by Sergei Eisenstein; *Shchors*, 1939, directed by Alexander Dovzhenko; *Bohdan Khmelnytsky*, 1941, directed by Igor Savchenko). Writer was less significant figure, he was under the strong state and party control, he rarely could be cultivated, except, may be, Maxim Gorky against the will of Gorky himself, because of his role in the establishment and declaration of the Socialist realism as one method of the Soviet literature and art. If to distinguish between sacral figures like ancient gods and more secular figures like medieval knights and kings above-mentioned samples relate to the second of these categories. They were heroes in that degree in which they embodied public ideals. Such hero is ready to offer his own life for the sake of these ideals and to deny his personality as something valuable. At the same time the person who opposed society, really or as propaganda proclaimed it, were announced as public enemies without any romanticizing, anti-heroes and sometimes these were the same persons (Mikhail Tukhachevsky, hero of the civil war 1918-1920, accused later in plot and other crimes and executed). Three idols took first place absolutely and they were more than heroes, they became sacral figures for the Soviet ideology, especially in the most orthodox Stalinist period – Marx, Engels and Lenin, though until 1956 really Joseph Stalin was the third and Engels more as companion of Marx. Later last of these pillars fall and three others lost large part of their charisma but not totally. It was something like Holy Trinity and Marxism-Leninism as kind of quasi-religion. Some monuments still take their place in the Ukrainian and other post-soviet cities but mainly approach to their role in the history whether positive or negative depends on many factors which are far from historical knowledge. We mean age, type of education, place of residence because last define often preferable language in every-day conversation, confessional, ideological and cultural priorities.

Both Russian and Ukrainian culture had not cultivated heroes at least up to the 19th century as well as Orthodox Church was more passive in the cultivating of saints comparatively to the Vatican. Ukrainian Cossacks represent special subject but the memory about Cossacks' virtues was kept more in the folklore than in the high literature. On the contrary the empire forced to destroy not only

Zaporizhian Sich itself physically but the spiritual influence of this phenomenon over Ukrainians.

The samples of the contrary trend are very poor. M. Lomonosov's *Ode to the Seizure of Khotyn* in 1739 can be mentioned here but in fact it glorified not so much to heroes of this event, warriors and commanders, as the empire and personally was devoted to the empress Anna of Russia or Anna Ivanovna. Medieval kniazes of the Kievskaya Rus really didn't print themselves in the popular culture and memory except of one of them, possibly, kniaz Igor Svyatoslavich who was famed for his battle with Cuman people. It should be noticed that he had not won that battle but revealed bravery and love to his homeland and his wife. Later the eminent army commanders and kings or people from their environment were rarely the same persons in the Russian military history. Rather, on the contrary, popular military leaders were, as a rule, under permanent suspicion and sometimes even exiled for mid-war periods (Alexander Suvorov, Fyodor Ushakov, Mikhail Kutuzov, Mikhail Skobelev etc.). In some cases canonization confirmed their authority both for the secular power and popular consciousness. First Kievskaya Rus' kniazes – saints were not battle men but innocent victims – Boris and Gleb. Canonization moderated the spirit of war and violence which embodied even most prominent military heroes like Dmitry Donskoy, Alexander Nevsky, and Fyodor Ushakov – all of them were proclaimed as saints. I think it's not so common for the medieval heroes of the Western Europe. A Hero of Our Time from Mikhail Lermontov's novel really is neither saint nor real hero as winner. He is not active actor at all as M. Bakhtin uses this concept in his essay *The author and hero in Aesthetic Activity* (the hero cannot be for himself; he must see himself from outside, and in the whole integrity). In above-mentioned novel's case hero means rather the place in the current life, typical character. As to the warriors classical Russian literature and art as well combines description of their heroism and absurdity and uselessness and cruelty of the war like paintings of Vasily Vereshchagin or Leo Tolstoy in his *Sebastopol Sketches* and his famous *War and Peace*. Napoleon who was glorified in the numerous poems, paintings and historical writings as Hero in Tolstoy's novel is described as not hero absolutely but rather tragic-comical personage, caricature on the personality's role in the history.

In the Western literature similar approach to the war prevailed since First World War, especially in the literature of "the lost generation". *Death of a Hero* by Richard Aldington (1929) signified swiping of the wide range of utopias and illusions off the western intellectuals' consciousness. Death of God and death of the author strengthened this tendency towards anti-hero instead of hero. It can be said there are no heroes in the antic hay of the 20th century's West European literature. We can see neither victim, worthy true compassion, nor villain equal to the Romantic demonic characters. Anti-hero dominates in this cultural space. He is the outsider in relation to the consumer society and its ideals and values. At the same time he doesn't aspire to build his own ideological system. Various temporal trends and associations cross in his consciousness but he feels bored and disappointed from the reality here and now. Despite of intensive attention to

the problem of personality western culture in the last century didn't create truly monumental figures and titanic persons. It seems while Western intellectuals supposed there would no heroes and heroism there but anti-hero or at least hero of absurd (Sisyphus) Soviet culture produced a lot of heroes despite of the fact that previous centuries demonstrated readiness of the both Russian and Ukrainian intelligentsia to be a victim although on the different reasons and lack of heroes.

In Soviet times title "Hero of Soviet Union" was established (in 1934) and honoration of the heroes was device of propaganda and sometimes it was inverted into absurdity like 4 times honored L. Brezhnev (only two persons – G. Zhukov and Brezhnev). After independence revival in 1991 title "Hero of Ukraine" (in 1998) with no less tragicomic episodes like story with Stepan Bandera and Roman Shukhevych who were posthumously conferred this title by President Victor Yushchenko in 2007 and Court of Appeals on April 21, 2010 satisfied an appeal that deprived Roman Shukhevych the Hero of Ukraine title, as Shukhevych was not a citizen of Ukraine. Accordingly Stepan Bandera was conferred this title in the early 2010 and deprived in June in the same year but under the President Yanukovich although the Hero of Ukraine decrees do not stipulate the possibility that a decree on awarding this title can be annulled. It is not historical research and we gave these samples only to demonstrate that under totalitarian and authoritarian regimes question of heroes is a political question and as to Ukraine, this issue has not united by, on the contrary, divided Ukraine and we have not really generally-accepted persons as national heroes accept, may be, Taras Shevchenko who was in his life far from battles or really heroic deeds. Rather he suffered but didn't submit himself to tsarism and tyranny like Ukraine itself. Other samples are Andrej Shevchenko (footballer) and brothers Klitschko at some triumphal moments of their lives. All political figures including Viktor Yushchenko are disputable and not recognizable for whole Ukraine as heroes. Explosion of heroes and heroism in the 20th century as well as renaming the streets and destroying the monuments is very common thing for the Soviet Union and all post-soviet countries, including Ukraine. I explain it as consequence of two main factors. First of them is explosion of the interest to the heroes since 19th century after many centuries of suffering and hope and, secondly, absolute depending on the political factors. In Soviet ideology heroism was profaned finally despite strong interest to it. Sometimes popular consciousness produced or enthusiastically supported various Soviet cults but mainly heroes were proposed by the power with help of all arts. Moreover, not only title "Hero of Soviet Union" was invented but also title "Hero of Socialist Labor". The concept of heroism was incorporated into every-day life – sample of the famous miner Aleksei Stakhanov inspired many workers and collective farmers in the 1930s.

Russian intelligentsia felt victim and slave of the questions which its representatives faced themselves and was ready to be sacrificed in all times. Russian intellectuals were afraid to lose their soul first of all and embodied their phobias in the image of the society where a man refuses his freedom for the food and stable and predicted existence like vision proposed by the Great Inquisitor in Dostoyevsky's

novel. Western intellectuals observed regimes which they defined as totalitarian but for them most dangerous was technocratic anti-utopia even with some totalitarian taste. This kind of anti-utopia embodied fear before the machines, robots, mechanisms actual since Romantics and supported by Wells and later Huxley. In the first case the human soul is threatened and in the second case human civilization on the whole, human species and their intellectual freedom and potential. Possibly, Yevgeny Zamyatin echoed both fear in his anti-utopia *We [My]*.

In Ukraine whole nation felt victim and appealed to the past, first of all to Cossacks' romanticized image. We still not have formulated clearly national idea and clear goals towards which we should move. We rejected totalitarian model but imported other mechanisms of the idolizing reality and manipulation of consciousness. Most dangerous is to invert heroes into idols. Possibly, disputableness of the main Ukrainian heroes is good. May be, one universal Ukrainian hero in Ukraine now is Taras Shevchenko who was far from politics. Cossacks were involved in political affairs but they have been dignified not so much in this quality as defenders of Ukrainian Church, national identity, culture, language, social and religious interests of the Ukrainian people. As to their political priorities they were at least very flexible.

In our look, Western culture has been preoccupied by the fear to loose political rights and human rights, including the right to be Sisyphus. Eastern culture has been preoccupied by the fear to be abused by phantoms of the welfare and consuming society. And really these phantoms destroyed USSR from inside, possibly. Accordingly various negative utopias embodied these fears. And both types of outlook found themselves before loosing of critical thinking. Western intellectuals understood it earlier and moved their look from outside to inside and saw dangers of the consumer society.

It is dangerous when whole nation idolizes some person, especially person not from the past but from the present and especially politicians and especially this cult embraces whole nation. If the hero usually merits for his bravery and military and other talents, idol often is product of mass-media. Idol can be o.k. for some special part of society or auditoria, for example in the frame of radio or TV-channel space, for the street, for the army, for the generation. Totalitarian can state idolize either whole nation or ruler or both but it means that other nations and states are enemies. But while entertainment industry in the society of consumption explores emotions, the totalitarian regime restricts them and directs in the certain way as *Two Minutes Hate* in Orwell's novel. Besides idolizing is more mythological, sacral, religious fact than cult of heroes. Heroes appeared in Greek mythology as result of its secularization.

It is reasonable to suppose authoritarian regime is more clear, more defined, understandable and less ambiguous fact than totalitarian one and consumer society. Now we can observe unique moment when during very short time as from the historical distance several most odious regimes in the Africa and Middle East fell down. But it is question how much people in these countries are ready to operate the freedom and take responsibility not to create new idols.

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LAJOS KOSSUTH IN HUNGARIAN FOLK NARRATIVES

The 19th century was the period that saw the birth of the European nations, when new ideals and new ideal heroes were needed for the legitimisation of the political aspirations, values and laws. Napoleon was the first of these national heroes; later the European revolutions created their own heroes. The great figures of the Hungarian nation too struggled in the 1848/49 Hungarian revolution and war of independence: István Széchenyi, Lajos Kossuth, Sándor Petőfi, the 13 generals executed at Arad, who all became national heroes during the struggles for freedom or instantly following the defeat of the war of independence.

A common feature in the biographies of national heroes is that the hero always appears on the scene in difficult times – in a period of revolution, or war – to help his people. Signs predicting his birth can be seen or are expected. They foretell his future great deeds. He goes through physical and mental trials that could be regarded as an “initiation”, that make it clear he is a chosen one. His personal fate is intertwined with that of the nation, he puts his mission before his family life, defends and struggles for his goal to the end. If he fails, he dies for a nation, for an ideal. He may become a national symbol already in his lifetime.¹

This life career model can be seen in the life history of Lajos Kossuth (1802–1894), the great 19th century Hungarian statesman and intellectual leader of the Hungarian freedom struggles. His biographies, from contemporary biographies right up to today’s school textbooks stress precisely these aspects. Kossuth, a man with origins in the minor nobility, wins election to the Hungarian feudal Diet as a representative of absentee aristocrats. He takes a stand as spokesman for the ideals of Hungarian freedom, he is imprisoned for his political role and comes out strengthened in body and soul. He leads the revolution, recruits an army, fails, is forced into exile from where he continues to organise the resistance, makes a new attempt to launch the struggle, retires, but throughout his life and even after his death his people await his return.

Up to 1848 Lajos Kossuth was known in a relatively small circle of Hungarian society, to the nobility involved in politics; he became known throughout the country in 1848 when he took the lead of the Hungarian freedom movement and later of the struggle to defend the country. His tour of the Great Plain to gather recruits in the autumn of 1848 when he visited all the larger settlements played a big part in this.² Many people have written about the events of that tour,³ and

1 Cf. Sokolewicz 1991: 125–136.

2 Barta 1952a: 26.

3 Cf. *Alföldi Hírlap*, 1848. október 22.; Egressi 1848. IX. 29.; Gracza n. d. [1903]: 240; Jókai 1868: 102–105.

there are many known portrayals.⁴ Wherever he went his audience was made up largely of agricultural workers, farmers and merchants of the market towns. Historical research shows that his recruiting tour had very little influence from the military point of view; in reality the army was formed from conscripts.⁵ It was much rather the political and psychological impact of his tour that was of inestimable value. This was the first time the peasants were able to see the man they regarded as their “liberator”, whose name was associated with the abolition of villeinage. Numerous measures intended to assist the process of embourgeoisement, among them the abolition of villeinage, the most serious burden afflicting the serfs, had been introduced in laws signed by the emperor in April 1848. Kossuth had played a leading role in the drafting and adoption of these “April laws”. The majority of those interviewed by ethnographers collecting material in the 20th century stated, when asked about Kossuth, that he liberated the serfs and abolished villein service for the lords.⁶

Kossuth’s appearance, his charisma and speaking skills predestined him to arouse the attention of his listeners, in many cases also their enthusiasm and even adulation.⁷ Many of the statues of Kossuth portray him making a speech to the people of the Great Plain; among others the Kossuth statue in New York also recorded this scene. Kossuth’s speeches on the Great Plain made him better known and popular, but it was during his years in exile that his fame reached its peak.

Because of the failure of the Hungarian freedom struggle Kossuth was forced to flee in August 1849. Practically from the moment Kossuth had to leave the country the Hungarians awaited his return.⁸ They began to hope for his return especially after the defeat of the Austrians at Solferino in 1859, when Garibaldi and his Red Shirts launched the struggle for the unification of Italy. Kossuth never succeeded in returning to Hungary in his lifetime. He died in exile in Torino in 1894. His body was brought back to Hungary and the Hungarian nation bade farewell to the great man with pomp and dignified ceremonies.⁹ All this left its imprint in folklore; many stories are known about his death, the return of his coffin, his funeral and of how people still hoped for his return even after his death.¹⁰

Even before his exile Kossuth was given the honorary title of “the Hungarians’ Moses”. An anecdote about the origin of this title is known in many variants. According to this when Kossuth arrived in Debrecen on 6 January 1849 with the government and members of parliament who had fled from Pest, the commander of the guard made the following entry in the guest book at the town gate: “At two o’clock this afternoon, Lajos Kossuth, »the Hungarians’ Moses« arrived with his family”.¹¹

4 Körmöczi 1994: 379–380.

5 Barta 1952b: 149–166; Szabad 1977: 143; Deák 1983: 187.

6 Landgraf 2004: 353–363.

7 Barta 1952b: 149–166; Deák 1983: 187; Szabad 1977: 143; Hermann 1994: 81–82.

8 *Budapesti Hírlap*, 1894. március 21. 11.

9 Gerő 2004: 53–78.

10 Gyoma, Bereczki 1947a: EA/2036; Dévaványa, Bereczki 1947b: EA 2037/353; Szászfa: Irányi 1947: EA 2112/296; Nádudvar: Aukner–Emőd 1947: EA 2065/80.

11 Szűcs 1989: 176.

After the defeat of the war of independence many people preserved the banknotes issued in 1848–49 when Kossuth was minister of finance, known as Kossuth-notes even though possession of them could result in serious punishment.¹² During ethnological collections a hundred years later this was the material relic of 1848 most widely found, preserved by families for generations.

Already Kossuth's contemporaries noticed how many songs included his name.¹³ In 1867 the Austrian Empire and the Kingdom of Hungary settled their political, legal and economic relations. Under the agreement reached the Austrian emperor was crowned king of Hungary as Franz Joseph I, who gave his approval for the Hungarian laws under the agreement, resulting in the birth of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. After this, censorship was slightly relaxed.¹⁴ In publications that appeared before 1867 the songs of the war of independence could be included only with substantial cuts.¹⁵ Strong punishment was imposed even for singing the so-called "Kossuth song".¹⁶ The song had been published in newspapers in 1848 as a recruiting song. It quickly became popular in the Hungarian-speaking territories and has remained well known right up to the present. Right from the start the Kossuth song occupied a prominent place in the Kossuth traditions. For example, after 1867, those who published their reminiscences of the revolution in the newspapers always cited one or two lines from the Kossuth song,¹⁷ and it was also frequently sung at political demonstrations around the time of the change of political system in Hungary after 1899.

After the Austro-Hungarian political compromise of 1867 it became possible within certain limits to cultivate memories of the freedom struggle. A selection of revolutionary poetry was published¹⁸ extracts from Kossuth's main works appeared,¹⁹ and one year after the coronation of Franz Joseph a Kossuth album was also published.²⁰ After 1867 cheap booklets of "songs of revolutionary times" were published and the opposition newspapers also devoted space to them. Already in 1868 it was proposed that the songs of the freedom struggle should be collected and published.²¹

A national ethnological collection of relics of the 1848/49 revolution and war of independence was made in 1948, the centenary year. The aim of the collecting was to explore the form in which the ideals, heroes and events of the struggle for freedom lived on in Hungarian popular awareness a hundred years after the events, what people thought and what they knew about 1848/49. The aim was not so much to examine the genres of historical popular poetry, but rather the imprint

12 Cf. Gerő 1988: 73.

13 Cf. Ujváry 1995: 100.

14 Tóth K. 1894: 194–195.

15 E.g. Mátray 1852–58; Szini 1865.

16 Dégh 1952a: 19–23.

17 [R. S.] 1873: 234–236.; Kossuth Emléklap 1889; Tóth K. 1894: 194–195.; *Vasárnapi Újság*, 12. 1894. március 25 – április 15; Kossuth apánk [1902].

18 Áldor n. d.; Áldor 1867.

19 Áldor 1870; Áldor 1871.

20 Áldor–Ormodi 1868.

21 *Magyar Ujság* 1868: (február 15.) 150. cf. Dégh 1952b: 22–23.

left by the events two or three generations later.²² The political atmosphere of the period can be felt in the way the goals of the major collecting campaign were formulated. 1948 was what became known as the “turning-point year” in Hungary, the time of the communist take-over of power and the beginning of the establishment of communist dictatorship.

The collecting work resulted in a vast amount of manuscript material as the work was carried out by close to six hundred persons from collecting points within the boundaries of present-day Hungary. These points were selected for their proximity to renowned places and battlefields of the war of independence. Ten persons were interviewed in each settlement chosen. The collectors sought traces of events of the revolution and war of independence, the big battles and Kossuth’s recruiting tour, both in the remembrance of descendants and in tangible relics. The collecting work was carried out by ethnologists, university students of ethnology and volunteer ethnological collectors. The period following the war of independence was actually experienced history for some of the interviewees, but for the majority it was the time of their fathers and grandfathers. The material collected contained a great deal of anecdotes and relatively few linguistically polished, refined legend texts. Not only the heroes of the revolution and war of independence appear in the stories (such as Lajos Kossuth, János Damjanich, Mór Perczel, Sándor Petőfi, Mihály Táncsics, József Bem, Artúr Görgei, György Klapka, Henryk Dembiński, Lajos Batthyány, Sándor József Nagy, and their adversaries Josip Jelačić, Ödön Zichy, Julius Jacob von Haynau), but also other great figures of the period, poets and writers (Ferenc Kölcsey, Mihály Vörösmarty, Mihály Tompa, János Arany, Mór Jókai), politicians (Ferenc Deák, Mihály Táncsics, Miklós Wesselényi, Ferenc Kossuth), as well as a good few outlaws and local heroes.

The organisers of the collecting had the preconception that Lajos Kossuth was the “leading figure of the struggle for freedom”, and this fact would also be reflected in folk tradition. All the informants were asked: “Who was Lajos Kossuth?” There were innumerable communications related to Kossuth even within a single collecting manuscript. In an article written in 1952, Gyula Ortutay – a well-known Hungarian ethnologist and left-wing politician, minister for religious affairs and education from 1947–50 – summed up the results and lessons of the collecting project. He stressed that it confirmed what the organisers had thought, namely that in the people’s eyes Kossuth rose far above the other freedom fighters.²³ A selection of the material collected was published, but exclusively with texts that confirmed this conception. In 1998, the 150th anniversary of the events, a selection was published representing the whole of the material collected. In several studies I have attempted to make a realistic, professional evaluation of the 1948 collection.²⁴ The manuscript collection preserved in the Ethnological Archive of the Museum of Ethnography is a rich storehouse of folklore related to the revolution

22 Dégh n.d.: 230.

23 Ortutay 1952: 263–307.

24 E. g. Landgraf 1998; Landgraf 2004;

and war of independence. The conclusions that can be drawn from the material are much more complex than the picture given by Gyula Ortutay in his overview.

The majority of those interviewed during the 1848 centenary ethnological collecting said in connection with Lajos Kossuth that: *He liberated the serfs,²⁵ abolished the tithe,²⁶ ended villein service,²⁷ distributed land, and even liberated the whole world.²⁸ In cases the informants expressed this in such practical terms as he wanted to introduce free distilling and freedom to sell meat.²⁹ “[...] Kossuth made things so that people didn’t have to go and plough for the lord. So then they stopped going for forced labour.”³⁰*

It was almost as often stated that *he directed the war of independence*. He wasn’t a soldier, but he was the leader. Many of the interviewees spoke of him as a *king*.³¹ Many emphasised that *the people loved him*,³² proof of this was that they addressed him as our father Kossuth. The commemorative albums that appeared after 1867 in honour of Kossuth often also called him “our father Kossuth”.³³

When we look for episodes of his life history in the folklore, we find that a number of informants mentioned in connection with his birth that: *he was born with en-caul* (with an intact amniotic sac) a sign foretelling his historical mission.³⁴ This was in fact true, Kossuth himself referred to it a number of times, and it has been mentioned a few times in biographies. The uncertainties around the place where he was christened appear as a local legend in Tállya and its vicinity. This memory is also reinforced by the placing of a memorial tablet recalling his christening in the church in Tállya.³⁵

The influence of written culture and popular reading matter can be seen in the stories collected on *the time he spent in prison*, and on *life in prison*.³⁶

I have already mentioned Kossuth’s recruiting tour on the Great Plain. The memory of *Kossuth as recruiter* is also preserved in oral traditions. “The soldiers joined up to Kossuth voluntarily.”³⁷ “They willingly fought beside him. He did not even have to recruit.”³⁸ “Kossuth himself came here recruiting...”³⁹ The sight of a Kossuth statue inspired the following memorate: “[...] when the Hungarian world came to an end, Kossuth passed through Ványa too. He was leaving the

25 Böde, Sztankovszky 1947: EA 2060/38; Pilisszentkereszt, Varró 1947: EA 2046/11, 14, 17; Szászfalva, Irányi 1947: EA 2112/295, 298; Hochstrasser 1947: EA 2110/153; Szentlőrinc, Németh 1947: 37, 39, 104.; Tiszafüred, Nagy–Németh 1947: EA 2119/25.

26 Bakonybél, Pesovár 1947a: EA 2114/21.

27 Meszes, Irányi 1947: EA 2112/19.

28 Técsfalva, Réthely Prikkel 1947: EA 2044/3, 54.

29 Békés, Ligeti 1947: EA 2061/98.

30 Felsőgaly, Irányi 1947: EA 2112/275.

31 Gyöngyöspata, Luttor 1947: EA 2059/77; Gönc, Kozma 1947: EA 2080/8; Szúpaták, Pesovár 1947b: 2113/191.

32 Gyoma, Ligeti 1947: EA 2061/36.

33 Kossuth apánk [1902].

34 Tállya, Juhár 1947: EA 2054/11.

35 Tállya, Juhár 1947: EA 2054/10; Meszes, Irányi 1947: EA 2112/282.

36 Meszes, Irányi 1947: EA 2112/297.

37 Szalonna, Irányi 1947: EA 2112/277.

38 Szalonna, Irányi 1947: EA 2112/285.

39 Mór, Hegyi 1947: EA 2070/19.

country. It was terribly sad. He made a speech in the market place. He held up a finger as he spoke."⁴⁰

The life of *Kossuth in exile* is also a frequent theme of folklore stories.⁴¹ Many people spoke about his long exile, about how the king would not allow him to return. The newspapers,⁴² almanacs,⁴³ commemorative albums⁴⁴ and collections of anecdotes all dealt in detail with the successes of Kossuth's tours in Europe and America and of his enthusiastic reception.⁴⁵ The informants summed this up by saying that *he was loved and respected abroad too*.⁴⁶ In the words of a farmer from Gyoma in 1947:

"Kossuth spoke in very good English when he went over to New York or where it was he spoke to the people. They kept slaves there in those days. A grand American gentleman came in a carriage pulled by 4–5 negro slaves to hear Kossuth speak. Kossuth, of course, saw this, and said:

– Look here, why do you do this, even if their skin is black they are just people like us!

So he liberated the blacks. Every black man there has a picture of Kossuth in his home. They respect him more than we do."⁴⁷

In a great number of the texts collected either a parallel is drawn between Lajos Kossuth and Franz Joseph or they are contrasted. "Franz Joseph is dead, happiness is lost; Lajos Kossuth is dead, justice is lost!"⁴⁸ A frequently occurring communication in the Kossuth traditions is that Kossuth abolished the villein service,⁴⁹ but in the ethnological collecting on the centenary of 1848 interviewees attributed this to Franz Joseph with almost the same frequency. ("When Franz Joseph became king, the people had everything they needed under his rule. He liberated the serfs too."⁵⁰) And not only in folklore stories but also in songs Kossuth's name was replaced with that of Franz Joseph, at times even in the Kossuth song. But this should not be attributed solely to the efficiency of censorship or the Viennese court propaganda. Although there is no doubt that the anti-war of independence, pro-imperial writings and articles in cheap popular publications stated that it was not Kossuth but Franz Joseph who liberated the serfs.⁵¹ Later, at the time of the First World War objects appearing with the king's portrait also popularised the ruler of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Soldiers' commemorative

40 Dévaványa: Bereczki 1947b: EA 2037/48.

41 Cf. Rakaca, Irányi 1947: EA 2112/306; Szalonna, Irányi 1947: EA 2112/286; Kalocsa, Solymos 1947: EA 2077/6. Tiszaszöllős, Nagy–Németh 1947: EA 2119/100.

42 Szabad 1977: 189–199.

43 E. g. Debreceni Képes Kalendárium, 1902: 70–71.

44 Kohányi n. d.

45 Tóth B. 1888–1903/III: 263–265, 265–266.

46 Szászfa, Irányi 1947: EA 2112/302; Felsőgaly, Irányi 1947: EA 2112/274; Kunhegyes, Aukner–Emőd 1947: EA 2065/225; Kunhegyes, Aukner–Emőd 1947: EA 2065/225; Gyoma, Ligeti 1947: EA 2061/36; Tiszanána, Aukner–Emőd 1947: EA 2065/662.

47 Gyoma, Ligeti 1947: EA 2061/16–17. Cf. Hermann 1994: 115.

48 Bakta, Irányi 1947: EA 2112/ 42.

49 Landgraf 2004: 359.

50 Táillya, Juhár 1947: EA2054/ 22.

51 Deák 1983: 348.

certificates, war-time oleographs, wall hangings, plates and mugs bearing the portrait of Franz Joseph were mass-produced and sold cheaply, so that they also reached peasant homes, strengthening the image of the *people's good father and good king*.⁵² The booklets of printed scores published during the First World War (such as *National and Battle Songs of the Monarchy and Germany* with a coloured cover) had portraits of Franz Joseph and Kaiser Wilhelm on the title-page and contained a number of originally 1848 song texts in which Kossuth's name was replaced with that of the king.

After 1867, and especially by the time of the First World War the image of Franz Joseph in both popular and folk culture began to change. The judgement of the ageing Austrian emperor and Hungarian king who had suffered many blows and lost many family members became much more favourable. The figure of Franz Joseph in the role of "father of the Hungarian people" gradually became intertwined with that of Lajos Kossuth.⁵³

Compared with the wealth of oral traditions associated with the name of Lajos Kossuth, there were relatively few stories that became shaped into historical legend. A good few of these are well known legend types linked to other historical figures. For example, a typical type from the King Matthias legends about making the lords hoe the fields⁵⁴ or the sprouting of a stick (used in herding animals) as a symbol of his coming election as king.

"Kossuth went out to the workers on the hill. The lords were drinking wine in the shade. Then he told them to go and hoe. And they did, but they couldn't stand the work. So Kossuth took away their wealth and gave it to the workers."⁵⁵

"Kossuth was the king. He was a poor servant boy. He was ploughing with a man called János. It was at the time they were electing a king. The boy stuck 100 sticks in the ground and said: I will be king when these sticks shoot. They did shoot. He became King Kossuth."⁵⁶

Two typical motifs of the outlaw legends – *escaping with reversed horseshoes*⁵⁷ and *invulnerability*⁵⁸ – both occur in association with Kossuth too. A separate type of Kossuth stories explains the changes and the granting of freedom as the result of *an agreement between Kossuth and the king*.⁵⁹ The most frequently occurring Kossuth story in the 1948 collection tells how *Kossuth takes over guard duty from a shivering sentry*.⁶⁰ The story was also popularised in the collections of anecdotes published by György Gracza, Béla Tóth and Ernő Szűcs.⁶¹ It is a genre characteristic of the historical legend that the same historical figure may appear as either a

52 Landgraf 2007: 293–311; Kovács Á. 1985; 1987.

53 Landgraf 2005: 127–140.

54 Dömötör 1998: 45.

55 Bogdánd, Bereczki 1947c: EA 2040/16.

56 Szalonna, Irányi 1947: EA 2112/278.

57 Alsógaly, Irányi 1947: EA 2112/288.

58 Dégh 1952a: 145; Dömötör 1998: 44.

59 Nádudvar, Aukner–Emőd 1947: EA 2065/77; Kaposmérő, Kiss 1947: EA 2097/60.

60 Nagyrév, Hochstrasser 1947: EA 2110/153, 157; Tiszafüred, Nagy–Németh 1947: EA 2119/81; Dégh 1952a: 44–45.

61 Tóth B. 1888–1903/III: 34–35; Gracza n. d. [1901]: 5–6; Szűcs 1989: 177–178; Dégh 1952a: 58–59.

positive or a negative hero. There is also a type of Kossuth story in which blame is placed on Kossuth. He is accused of *being incapable of reaching agreement, of causing many deaths*, but most frequently of *stealing the crown*.⁶² Already during the war of independence the story spread that in the winter of 1848 in Buda Castle, in the company of his ambitious wife Kossuth took the royal jewels, put the Hungarian crown on his head and looking at himself in the mirror, said: "Of, how well it will suit me!"⁶³

At the time of Kossuth's death numerous publications and commemorative albums appeared in his honour with the important function of shaping the image of Kossuth in folklore and popular culture.⁶⁴ A newspaper article published at the time of his death wrote: "[...] the strength of the Kossuth cult among the Hungarian people can best be seen in the firm belief among the people of Avar that the bright red light in the sky was a miracle of nature mourning Kossuth. This conviction is still strong among the people of Arad and vicinity."⁶⁵

If we seek the criteria raised at the beginning of this paper, the characteristic signs of the national hero in the Kossuth traditions, songs, historical legends and memorates, we find a number of them.

His birth was marked by unusual phenomena (birth en-caul, the circumstances of his christening).

He was guided by the ideals of national independence and progress.

He was imprisoned.

He launched and recruited for a war of independence.

He is the object of general affection and respect.

He was forced into exile.

His return is awaited even after his death.

Miraculous signs marked his death.

The purpose of my paper has been to show that the real events of Lajos Kossuth's life, the reports about him (in newspapers, almanacs, commemorative albums, etc.) and the characteristics of the epic heroes of literature and the heroes of folklore stories, historical legends and anecdotes have all contributed to shaping the image of Kossuth in Hungarian folklore.

62 Tésenfa, Réthey Prikkel 1947: EA 2044/55; Dévaványa, Bereczki 1947b: EA 2037/619, 636; Endrőd, Ligeti 1947: EA 2061/69; Cegléd, Cseh 1947: EA 2111/87.

63 Tóth B. 1888–1903/III: 128–129.

64 *Vasárnapi Újság* 1894. március 25., április 1., április 8., április 15. Baksay 1894; Dóczi 1894; Kossuth apánk [1902]; Emlékbeszédek 1903a; Emlékbeszédek 1903b; Kovács D. 1910; Dégh 1952a.

65 *Magyarország*, 1894. március 26. 6.

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ENLIGHTENMENT LEADERS DAY.

Subjects and objects¹

Study of national and – in general – public holidays is a means for studying political, historical, social and cultural development of a particular society. Forms, reasons, places of celebration represent specific national or local identity features, views towards history and markers and realms of memory as well as nationalistic and popular influences on regional or global level. The Enlightenment Leaders Day is among the newest in historical perspective holidays in Bulgaria – it appears at the beginning of 20th century and during the socialist period it was not celebrated at all. A Bulgarian journalist defines it as a unique because it has been two times established by people, it has been two times confirmed by the authority and it has been two times revoked.²

The holiday outlines very clear the social and economic changes in Bulgaria after the Liberation (1878) and especially after proclamation of the Independence (1908). On the other hand, the holiday is interesting per se because of its specific fate. My article aims to find the subjects and objects of the Enlightenment Leaders Day through tracing of history of the holiday, the publications on it in the press and media, through analysis of the forms of celebration. So the main question is: who celebrate and what do they celebrate?

The expression *enlightenment leaders* is not a precise translation of the Bulgarian one which is *narodni buditeli* – it means “people who woke the nation up”, and that word is neither translatable in other Slavic languages. Furthermore, in Bulgarian it appears as a title of a newspaper at the very end of 19th century. Gradually it enters as title of other newspapers, cultural institutions, clubs – Bulgarian *buditel*, National *buditel*, Spiritual *buditel*, etc. What expectations for the holiday’s object does this word produce? We definitely expect that the people who have woken the nation up from a sleep are the object of the holiday. In Bulgarian history some periods could be defined as such wakes: the Christianisation and accepting the Slavic alphabet together with the Cyril and Methodius’s disciples, liberation from Byzantine authority and re-establishing of autonomous Bulgarian church, and so called Revival period which finished with liberation from Ottoman Empire. If we have not known that the Enlightenment Leaders Day was not celebrated during the socialism we could add here the communist rebellions and liberation from the Fascism as well. So Bulgarians or foreigners, cultural, political or religious actors, kings or common citizens could be these *buditeli*.

1 This paper is a result of my work as Maria Curie Fellow at Estonian Literary Museum in Tartu (Supervisor: Mare Kõiva) within project “Nationalism and Urban Festivity in Post-socialist Europe: Narratives, Spaces, Powers”.

2 Georgiev 2003.

In this time the personal holidays of the royal family are predominantly celebrated as national in Bulgaria – the birthday of the king, the queen, or the crown prince, name day of the queen, anniversary of the king's crowning, etc. The military holidays are also important – especially May 6 and November 27. Till signing of the Treaty of Neuilly-sur-Seine on November 27, 1919, this date in Bulgaria was celebrated as the Day of Military Victories – because of the anniversary of the victory in Serbian-Bulgarian war (1885). After signing of the treaty, the Bulgarian society turned November 27 to a day of mourning for the lost Bulgarian territories. Then May 6 became not only the officers' day and, mainly, a day of recipients of the Order of honour bestowed each year by the king. Furthermore the biggest religious holidays and May 24 (the Day of Sts Cyril and Methodius) were celebrated widely as well.

Holiday's story

Bulgarian historians consider the Enlightenment Leaders Day to be celebrated for the first time in Plovdiv in 1909. It is interesting that nobody of these historians gives any proofs – I found only one – a letter to the minister of national education Stoyan Omarchevski from 1922 in which Plovdiv citizens mention that on November 1, 1909 the people spontaneously went on procession dedicated to the Bulgarian enlightenment leaders. I should underline that Plovdiv likes to be the birth place of the holidays. There is an analogical story about the first celebration of Sts Cyril and Methodius. Although we have really concrete proof that the first holiday was in 1814 in Shumen (it is a diary of an Armenian traveller) the official Bulgarian history claims that the Plovdiv's one was the first and it was organised by Naiden Gerov in 1853. So I prefer to deny the theory that the first Enlightenment Leaders Day was celebrated in Plovdiv because of the fact that in this time the historical and social context was not like this after World War I. Here I should mention that Bulgaria passes through two more wars before that, so we have 7 war years and very hard national political and economic catastrophe after that.

At the beginning of 1920s many initiatives for remembering of the great Bulgarians start all over the country – it concerns both Middle Ages and Revival period. Such initiatives appeared before the wars – for instance King Ferdinand established the Order "Sts Apostles Cyril and Methodius", in Varna an alley of monuments called Revival Alley was built, etc. However the trend from 1920s concerns building of a monument of a local Revival hero in each village or building of a memorial complex dedicated to the heroes and educators from the Revival times in each town. In the Ministry of National Education many letters were received – in this letters people from all over the country ask for permission to build a monument or to organise a feast in their place. Papers or biographies about so called "great Bulgarians" were published in the press and very often in separate editions. Stoyan Omarchevski, the minister of national education in this time, proclaimed the national heroes in many ways – he started building of Alley

of great Bulgarians in king's garden for instance. Finally, we may admit that the local elections in the autumn were also important.

On July 28, 1922 the Ministry of National Education sent circular to all educational and cultural institution in the country by which it set November 1 to be celebrated as "Day of Bulgarian Enlightenment Leaders", "day of the great Bulgarians". Beside that the ministry gives properties of the celebration – it should be in public and the holiday should not be only in the schools. The ministry also gives the object of the celebration – "the great Bulgarians"... "from Paisius till nowadays". Paisius of Hilendar is a Bulgarian monk who lived in 18th century and wrote the first Bulgarian history³. According to our historians the Bulgarian Revival period starts after writing of this history. So "the great Bulgarians" are limited within the Revival period, which basically means 19th century. The purpose of the holiday is also described in the circular: "to excite in our students and in our young generations in general, strong, deep meaningful interest in the figures of our past, in educational, political and cultural figures of our national life..."⁴ Furthermore, the ministry insists the holiday to be connected with local heroes, heroic events and places, mythology, etc.

In the very beginning (the first half of 1920s) the holiday is celebrated through prayer service in a large city church (in Sofia – *St. Nedelya* or *St. Alexander Nevsky*) which is attended by representatives of the pupils, students, teachers, society, as well as ministers and members of royal and city administration. After the service the crowd from the church participates in a procession laying wreaths on the graves and monuments of enlightenment leaders (in Sofia – on the monument of Vasil Levski and St. Clement of Ohrid and on the grave of Ivan Vazov).⁵

During next months in 1922 and 1923 the idea for celebration of the Bulgarian enlightenment leaders was approved by the Council of Ministers, the Parliament and King Boris III. After that till the end of 1930s each year monuments of the "Prominent Bulgarians" (this is the official name of the holiday in the Law of holidays and Sunday rest) were opened. In 1935 the Ministry of National Education sent to all schools a table called "National Enlightenment Leaders" where the portraits of 46 Revival actors were published. In beginning of 1930s Dobri Hristov, a prominent composer, wrote the so called "Anthem of Enlightenment Leaders".

November 1 was predominated by November 7 – St. Demetrius Day (old style) – one of the most important holidays for the developing Bulgarian society which used to mark the end of the agricultural year. On this day in Sofia and the biggest towns the so called servants market took place as well. In the press the topic about St. Demetrius Day often dominated the news about the Enlightenment

3 The first written history of Bulgaria is "Istoriya Slavyanobolgarskaya" [Slavonic-Bulgarian History] of St. Paisius from Hilendar. It was not printed but manually copied by monks and other educated people. There are about 70 manual copies preserved in various regions of the Balkans. The book was printed for the first time in 1844 in Budapest.

4 Omarchevski 1922.

5 Ivan Vazov was a Bulgarian poet, novelist and playwright, often referred to as "the Patriarch of Bulgarian literature". He died in 1921 and the minister Stoyan Omarchevski organized his funeral as national pilgrimage and turned his house to a memorial house – i.e. the minister promoted an enlightenment leader just after his death.

Leaders Day. Furthermore before World War II its celebration was rather an occasion for: (1) balance, comparison between new national leaders and the so called enlightenment leaders; and (2) critic toward the way of celebration with the argument that the spirituality should not to be celebrated on the squires.

After the beginning of World War II (1939), although Bulgaria did not join it immediately (till March 1, 1941) the celebration of the Enlightenment Leaders Day was not reflected in the press. In 1943 for the first time the Enlightenment Leaders Day was not celebrated as usual but as Name day of Queen Joana. It is declared to be a present day for the students and pupils but the schools should prepare a class for the celebrations in the biggest cities. After that till 1950 when the holiday was officially revoked, the day appeared twice (in 1948 and 1950) in the church calendars but there was not data of common celebrations. In 1950 the government realized a decision which revoked some of the holidays from the past (the Liberation Day – March 3, all religious holidays and the Enlightenment Leaders Day), leaving only Labor Day (May 1) and Sts Cyril and Methodius Day (May 24) and added September 9 – the Freedom Day, and November 7 – the Great October Revolution Day.

According some authors the Enlightenment Leaders Day is not actually revoked but it was moved to May 24 and all these leaders were celebrated together with Cyril and Methodius (who were not called saints anymore). Actually this claim is not correct. November 1, according the church calendar, is Assumption of St. John of Rila – a Bulgarian saint. The celebration of this holiday approves national as well as religious – both forbidden or, at least, suppressed by the socialism. Furthermore, addressing to the Revival heroes – many of them are rich traders or craftsmen educated abroad – was already inadequate regarding the new (and the last) much more important liberation – from Fascism. This claim is supported also by the fact that March 3 – the Day of Bulgaria's liberation from the Ottoman Empire – was also revoked and it was replaced by the Freedom Day – September 9 (the Day of the Liberation from the Fascism). Both holidays had been established and maintained by the monarchy.

The socialist regime made some more steps to delete even the memory about this holiday – in 1980s November 1 was declared to be the Day of “Rabotnik” Newspaper (the newspaper of the first Bulgarian communist leaders) and after that – Day of party press and Bulgarian journalists (by the way, the Bulgarian journalists had their holiday on 24 May). Meanwhile the Revised Julian Calendar (similar to Gregorian Calendar) was accepted by the Bulgarian Church in 1968 and almost all dates of the Orthodox calendar moved 13 days back. In this sense, November 1 was not the day of St. John of Rila anymore.

Immediately with the democratic changes, even before official fall of the socialist regime on November 10, 1989, some people in Bulgaria started discussing the revival of the Enlightenment Leaders Day. This discussion was started by the journalists who in 1990 moved their holiday back to May 24. In the same year the so called Nationwide Movement “Mati Bolgaria” was established and it started a national campaign for revivification of the holiday. November 1 was

celebrated again in 1992 but, although it is in the official national calendar, it is day-off only for educational establishments. On 1 November 2005 then President Georgi Parvanov introduced a new tradition – ceremonial rising of the flag over Bulgarian presidency. On this day the orders “Sts Cyril and Methodius” are given to their recipients by the president – however, it is a media event.

Certainly this holiday is a time and an occasion some professional communities to express their claims (mainly to the authorities) and to confirm their importance for the society – teachers, lecturers, sciences, librarians, university students, etc. It could be observed before the World War II when November 1 was also the day of miners and, in this sense, of miners’ towns⁶ (St. John of Rila is the patron of miners).

This year (2012) on March 30 the teachers syndicate opened the first monument in Bulgaria dedicated to the enlightenment leaders – next to the *Sts Sedmochislenitsi* church in Sofia. On the memorial plaque is written “With gratitude to the Bulgarian teachers – enlightenment leaders. From thankful generations of Bulgaria”. It is a good example of how a professional community occupies a national holiday on the basis of very literal interpretation of its name. In the context of Bulgarian language and historiography it seems obvious that the nation’s enlightenment leaders are actually the teachers from the past and the present.

On the other hand, every holiday is easy to be turned into a day for social protest⁷ because of some reasons: (1) the holidays are usually the only chance of common people to meet the authorities; (2) it is easier to attract people to participate in protests in holidays because they are days-off; and (3) the messages, aspirations and claims of the protesting people are more understandable and acceptable in the context of the celebrations.

Who celebrates the holiday? (subjects)

From its establishment the Enlightenment Leaders Day has been defined as students but not school holiday. During the first period it was celebrated by great all-city feasts, opening of monuments, procession of students with the portraits of Revival actors and flowers, etc. During its second period the celebration was not so rich, the day was not present for the students but it was working day, the students stayed at school. Nowadays in Sofia flowers are laid on the Monument of Unknown Soldier (not socialistic), after that there a parade of the president guardians takes place and the President gives speech. Regarding the fact that the post-socialist holidays are usually media, we could guess that the Enlightenment Leaders Day does not gather crowds of celebrating people.

6 A very interesting example is the town of Pernik (which is very close to Sofia) which is consider a town of miners and is a object of many jokes because of the funny local dialect. November 1 / October 19 is the patron holiday of Pernik and St. John of Rila is the patron of the town.

7 Etzioni and Bloom 2004: 152.

In this sense, we could not conclude that the Enlightenment Leaders Day has been and is being celebrated in a specific way – it has not own rituality or toponymy. On the other hand, it is obvious that the Bulgarian statehood (someone could add also the nation) needs this holiday after hard social and political crisis. It is completely logical because the Enlightenment Leaders Day moves the celebrating people back to times of heroic acts, cultural development, bright persons – it demonstrates an idealized past on the background of poor present.

Who are the enlightenment leaders? (objects)

Obviously, before World War II each pupil knew who the enlightenment leaders are – because of the rich celebrations, annual lectures, theatres, songs, tables with their portraits in each class-room. However, from the moment of its establishment the holiday consists the Medieval enlightenment leaders as well – the day of St. John of Rila was chosen for the holiday. This connection was supported once again at the reestablishment of the holiday when many scholars claimed that the holiday should be celebrated not on November 1 but on October 19 according to the current calendar; i.e. the connection Revival times – Middle Ages is immanent. And should be – the Bulgarian education “from Paisius till nowadays” respects two main period of our history: Golden Century of King Simeon the Great (9th-10th century) and the struggle for liberation from Ottoman Empire – a result of the Revival trends and done mostly by the ideologist Vasil Levski. In this sense, Middle Ages and Revival period are connected in advance with the notions of the great past.

Today the enlightenment leaders are everything and nothing. Around November 1 materials which discuss mostly the question whether we have inherited anything from these heroes (a topic typical in the 1920s) appears in media. There are some editions from 1990s consisting mostly papers about great Revival actors. The National TV plays some thematic movies – about rebellions or Medieval teachers or kings. Beside that the holiday is not complete and integrate – because of its closing in the school it has not vast public response.

The recent globalizing trends lead to another paradox. On November 1 many students from school and universities celebrate Halloween – usually on informal places. This is the most discussed topic and it is a matter of national pride to choose Enlightenment Leaders Day instead of the catholic All Saints (the Orthodox All Saints are on the first Sunday after Pentecost). These celebrations are actually mask-balls or carnivals but tempt a holiday which cannot find its place. However, this coincidence by chance gives me the reason to think whether the Enlightenment Leaders Day is connected with All Saints Day – a holiday both of everybody and nobody, a holiday which today reflects mostly the lack of will than the impulse of the nation to remember, a day when we give respect to these who are dead but not to those who are always alive.

Actually the socialist and the Christian ways of thinking on this holiday are surprisingly the same. I asked a people who was born and grew during the socialism “who the enlightenment leaders are?” and they said – “they are those great Bulgarians who are not in the national pantheon, they are mostly unknown.” According to Christianity, the All Saints are unknown as well. So both the socialism, or basically the “socialist” people, and the Christianity need a day dedicated to the unknown dead but respected people/saints. Perhaps the society from 1920s and 1930s also needed such a holiday dedicated to all these Bulgarians who died in the three wars or before but whose names were not on the monuments.

The socialist regime introduced a similar holiday through the Church – in 1954 the Sunday of All Bulgarian Saints was included in the national Orthodox calendar (the second Sunday after Pentecost). There were more than 100 canonized Bulgarians and after that on some occasions many persons connected with Revival history were canonized as well. However this holiday has not become popular enough, moreover within the Orthodox festivity All Saints Day is neither much celebrated.

Study of Enlightenment Leaders Day has not outlined the subjects and the objects of the holiday. Furthermore they have never been clarified or discussed. However it is natural for that particular holiday – it is a half-holiday with a half-life, a day-off for a part of the society – moreover – a holiday not for the whole society. It is like a short summary of the national festive system or of the nationally oriented messages of the other holidays.

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Fig. 1. Two caricatures on the front page of a humorous newspaper (Shturets, November 8, 1935): (1) – presenting the new Constitution as a cookbook of a maidservant who introduces to Bulgaria (as a queen) with the words: “My mistress, you do not need anything else, just hire my girl for one more year, I prepared to her a new cookbook and you will see what tender dishes she will prepare for you”; (2) – two enlightenment leaders – St. Paisius of Hilendar and Hristo Botev – in the National theatre discussing the vulgarity of its productions.



Fig. 2. Caricature of a procession joined by (1) a man with the image of St Paisius of Hilendar; (2) protesting students, collecting money for their rest home; and (3) a man from Pernik with slogan “Long live Pernik” (in local dialect) (Shturets, November 4, 1933).

NAMED OR UNNAMED, BUT NOT UNSUNG. Bulgarian national heroes

The focus of this article is not primarily on Bulgaria's national heroes as such or why they are considered heroes, but on how they are sung; that is, on the rituals and practices used when these heroes are celebrated on national holidays or similar nation-wide commemorations.

For our purpose here we shall establish a very simple typology of observance, distinguishing between participative events, where there is a lesser or greater degree of audience participation; and spectacles, where there is a distinct division between performers and onlookers. Performers in the latter category may represent the state, municipal or church organs, or NGOs.

We also assume a natural corollary from this division – that in order to achieve maximum impact, a participative event should include as many persons as possible, while a spectacle should be as interesting, striking or dramatic as possible.

The commemorations that will be considered are the following: March 3, *Den na Osvoboždenieto na Bălgarija ot osmansko igo* (Day of Bulgaria's liberation from the Ottoman yoke); May 24, *Den na bălgarskata prosveta i kultura i na slavjanskata pismenost* (Day of Bulgarian enlightenment and Slavic literacy); June 2, *Den na Botev i zaginalite za svobodata i nezavisimostta na Bălgarija* (Day of Botev and those who perished for Bulgaria's freedom and independence); and November 1, *Den na narodnite buditeli* (Enlightenment leaders' day).

March 3: soldier heroes

In the evening of this day, a remarkable and original ritual is performed in the capital's Parliament Square and in squares in other cities: *zarja-proverka* – a ritual evening roll call of honour. In the capital, several companies are lined up between the Parliament building and the monument to Tsar Alexander II and a ritual evening roll call is performed. This ritual is modelled on the regular evening roll call in the Bulgarian armed forces, but transforms it in a particular fashion. In the standard military version, the report of the company commander will usually go along these lines: "Captain – in company 3, all hands are present, except two hospitalised and three on leave." The March 3 ritual roll call is different: heroes fallen in battle are reported as being among the exceptions.

The field manual of the Bulgarian armed forces¹ contains detailed instructions for carrying out the ritual of *zarja-proverka*: "Announcers (or soldiers trained for this purpose) read out the names of those who have died heroically in the struggle

¹ Ustav 2008.

for the freedom and independence of the mother country, announcing them in a loud and solemn voice, for instance: "Captain Ivanov, fallen heroically in uneven battle with the Ottoman enslaver at Sofia in 1877."²

The template for the actual roll call is given as follows: "Major-general, in company 1 evening roll call is completed, all hands are present, except the volunteers from Sofia who fell in the struggle for Bulgaria's liberation. Company commander, Captain Stojanov (Stojanova)."³ The manual also specifies the music to be played and the duration (ten minutes) of the reading that precedes the roll call.

On March 3, 2011, this part of the ritual in Parliament Square⁴ was carried out by a male and a female announcer, with the male announcer (hence: "[M:]") reading out the name of the Bulgarian hero in question, the female ("[F:]") falling in with the feat associated with this hero, and swapping roles at intervals during the ten-minute reading. They started with the very beginning of the Bulgarian state:

[M:] Khan Kubrat – [F:] creator of the first Bulgarian state formation - Greater Bulgaria.

[M:] Yuviigi Khan Asparuh - [F:] founder of the first Bulgarian state in the Balkans, fallen in battle with the Khazars on the Dnepr in 701.

[M:] Khan Krum the Terrible - [F:] legislator, prudent statesman and warrior, who united the Slavs in the Balkans.

[M:] Tsar Boris I, [F:] baptist and consolidator of the Bulgarian nation

[M:] Tsar Simeon the Great, [F:] enlightener, diplomat, exceptional commander, who made Bulgaria a European political and military power.

The list continues through Bulgarian history and ends with a number of names of privates and officers, "fallen on the battlefields of Yugoslavia and Hungary", i.e., in the Bulgarian military campaign on the side of the Allies, September 1944 to May 1945. It is rounded off with an announcement of "eternal glory to the known and unknown Bulgarian soldiers, fallen for our Fatherland on the battlefields of..." followed by a long list of battlefields.

In the sequence that follows, the commanders of the four companies that stand at close order deliver their companies, one by one, to the officer in charge. For every company, a certain part of Bulgaria's historical military heroes is reported as not present (italicised by me below, KRH):

"Brigadier general! First company - evening roll call completed. All hands present and accounted for, except those who died heroically for the consolidation and defence of the Bulgarian state. Company commander, Captain Sugarev."

² Ustav 2008: paragraph 572, clause 15.

³ Ustav 2008, paragraph 572, clause 16.

⁴ Transcribed from the video archive of Bulgarian National Television, <http://bnt.bg/bg/videos/>. All translations are mine, KRH.

"Brigadier general! Second company - evening roll call completed. All hands present and accounted for, except those who died heroically in the April uprising of 1876. Company commander, First Lieutenant Mitev."

"Brigadier general! Third company - evening roll call completed. All hands present and accounted for, except those who died heroically as Bulgarian volunteers for the liberation of Bulgaria from Ottoman rule. Company commander, Captain Georgiev."

"Brigadier general! Fourth company - evening roll call completed. All hands present and accounted for, except the heroically perished Russian, Finnish and Romanian soldiers in the battle for Bulgaria's liberation from Ottoman rule. Company commander, First Lieutenant Sărbov."

With the elements that are italicised above, the roll call becomes equivalent to what in cognitive linguistics is called a blend, or a result of blending: a combination of elements from two mental spaces projected to a separate space.⁵ In this case, these are the mental space that involves a real military unit in real time and the mental space of the remembrance of a historical past. Together, these create another mental space with a counterfactual situation.

Fauconnier and Turner give the following example of a blending, assuming a contemporary philosopher leading a seminar: "I claim that reason is a self-developing capacity. Kant disagrees with me on this point. He says it's innate, but I answer that that's begging the question, to which he counters, in *Critique of Pure Reason*, that only innate ideas have power. But I say to that, what about neuronal group selection? He gives no answer."⁶ Here, Kant's eighteenth-century work is combined with a contemporary lecture, producing an imaginary simultaneous debate. In a similar fashion, the formal roll call on March 3 combines the mental space of the actual city square and the military personnel there with the mental space of Bulgarian history as taught in schools, forming a third, counterfactual mental space.

The counterfactual debate in Fauconnier and Turner's example would seem to lie within the limits of what seminar participants could expect from a creative lecturer, but how is the counterfactual spectacle in Parliament Square received? Bulgarian National Television's announcer on March 3, 2011 introduced it as a ritual that "illustrates our nation's live link between the past and the present". The commanding officer of the celebration the year before, in an interview for television, interpreted the counterfactuality of this blend in a similar way: "The essence of the roll call is to reflect the ability of the army to be the defender of the nation, and to create continuity between different generations". The interviewer, however, despite having set out to find an answer to the counterfactuality riddle, concludes somewhat defaultistically: "[...] it is important to observe traditions, not to explain them."⁷

5 Fauconnier and Turner 1996: 113.

6 Fauconnier and Turner 1996: 113.

7 Naplatanova 2010.

Others seem less inclined to accept the conceptualisation of the ritual. Blogger and author Manol Glišev, in a blog entry where he muses about how belief is important for Communists and Christians alike, writes: “As if the dead soldiers, instead of listening to Vazov’s [poem] ‘Goodnight, heroes’ remain in service under the banners after their heroic death [...] and periodically are called back by the invocations of the commanders.”⁸

May 24: heroes of culture

Two heroes, SS. Cyril and Methodius, are celebrated on this day, popularly called also “Alphabet day” and “Day of letters”. These heroes were Byzantine diplomats and scholars engaged in a ninth-century anti-papal Christianisation project in the Moravian lands, involving translation of the Bible into the Slavic vernacular. For political reasons, their project failed, but it had enormous reverberations in the Bulgarian lands, where their disciples gave rise to what is perhaps the greatest source of national pride for Bulgarians – the Cyrillic alphabet and the establishment of a Slavic literary tradition. While the March 3 celebration can safely be classified as a spectacle, this commemoration has developed into a participative event. In most of Bulgaria’s towns and villages it is characterised by a morning festive procession followed by cultural events of various nature. It was not like that in the first years after the fall of Communism, when the memory was still fresh of vast processions that were obligatory for schools and were benignly greeted from a podium by local or national dignitaries (in the capital, from the podium on top of Georgi Dimitrov’s mausoleum). A contributor in Georgi Gospodinov’s anthology *Az živjach komunizma* (‘I lived communism’) reminisces: “If you went to school under Communism, there is no way you can forget the processions. These crazy shows of stupidity, the new clothes for the holiday, shuffling for hours until it was your turn, the eternal rain, etc. cannot be forgotten.”⁹

When May 24 was declared an official holiday, non-working for all, in 1990, it was “taken off the streets”, as one orator expressed it, and returned to venues like Sofia University, the National Library, and National Culture Palace. State involvement was reduced. In 1990 it consisted of a prayer service in Aleksandăr Nevski cathedral and laying down wreaths at the Cyril and Methodius monument in front of the National Library, with presidential presence. After that, the Union of Democratic Forces put on a poetry reading in front of National Culture Palace, followed by a presumably not too orderly procession the short distance to Southern Park, where they were met by: “... hats with logos, badges, blue flags, newspapers, bandstands, concerts, beer, sandwiches, hot weather. And people, people. In a festive mood, enjoying themselves on the lawns, on the benches, in the shadows.”¹⁰

8 Glišev 2010.

9 Christova 2006.

10 Gălăbarova and Žukov 1990.

Presidential presence continues to be frequent, but not a dominating factor. Towards the end of the century, the procession through the streets was reinstated by Sofia mayor Sofijanski, and the presence of state officials became more evident. Also, the officials would walk together with the marchers, not inspect and greet them from above, and anti-authoritarian playfulness and lack of order and discipline continued.

Public figures have advocated making May 24 the official national holiday: In 2002, Prof. Bojan Biolčev, chancellor of Sofia University, opened his speech on the occasion of the holiday with the words: "There is no other day on which the Bulgarian is so smiling in harmony; there is no other moment that bestows the Bulgarian identity with so much satisfaction and comfort."¹¹ "When this spiritual celebration and day for national pride and grandeur becomes the Bulgarian's first day, it will mean that we are fully restored [from Communism]", said Professor Petko Petkov, vice-chancellor of Veliko Tŕrnovo University, in an interview.¹²

June 2, Botev day (and others')

On this day Bulgaria commemorates Christo Botev, a poet and revolutionary who fell in a skirmish with Ottoman troops in 1876. Botev has had to share the honour with a changing set of other heroes through the years: at its proclamation in 1901 it was called "Day of Botev and those who perished in the struggle against Turkish slavery". In 1953 "capitalism and fascism and in the Fatherland war" was added to "Turkish slavery"; from 1988 to 1990 the day was termed "Day of Botev and those who perished for the national and social liberation of Bulgaria"; from 1991 to 1993 "Day of Botev and of those who perished for Bulgaria's freedom", and finally from 1993 "and independence" was added to the latter designation.¹³

This date is a normal working day, but includes a dramatic, invasive and potentially all-encompassing ritual: since 1948, sirens have sounded all over the country at noon on June 2 to call for three minutes of silence and attention. In 1992, the Union of Democratic Forces government called off the sirens due to their "military-totalitarian character".¹⁴ They sounded again in 2000.¹⁵

This is one of the most compact and expressive kinds of commemoration one can find, participative not only through invitation, but with a strong moral, not administrative (as was the case of processions under Communism), imperative. From a semiotic point of view it consists of two parts: the announcement through the sirens and the silence and standing to attention (or at least not moving about) during the three minutes. These parts are probably quite different in the way that they are interpreted across cultures. Metaphors like *silence is respect* and *silence is mourning* seem to be widely spread: "Silence speaks of the power of remembrance,

¹¹ Biolčev 2002.

¹² Pŕrvanov 2009.

¹³ Dnevnik 2006.

¹⁴ Veličkova 1992.

¹⁵ Demokracija 2000.

yet without a word being spoken,¹⁶ and the contrast of the loud sounds of the sirens adds to the expressiveness.

Understanding the signalling of the silence by civil defence sirens, however, would seem to be dependent on knowledge of Bulgarian traditions. Many industrialised countries perform regular tests of civil defence sirens, often on a fixed date once a year and usually at twelve noon. The reaction of a resident of any such country would be to make a quick check of the time and then go on with their business as usual. Thus, the use of the sirens in Bulgaria is atypical, but then again, what other means do you have to call an entire population to three minutes of silence?

November 1, Enlightenment leaders' day

This holiday is non-working for the education sector only. It is celebrated on St. John of Rila's day, to commemorate propagators of national consciousness in the 18th and 19th centuries, when the Bulgarian lands were a part of the Ottoman Empire. The heroes are unnamed in the designation of the holiday, as are Botev's co-heroes who are celebrated on June 2, but they are fewer in number, and most educated Bulgarians will be able to name several of them. It is usually celebrated with a torch procession on the eve of November 1, and a variety of events relating to education and culture take place around this date.

Torch processions constitute a hybrid between participative celebrations and spectacles, and they seem to express the conceptual metaphor *a flame gives light*, which is quite appropriate in the context of the holiday of Enlightenment leaders. This connection is actually more evident in the English translation of the name of the holiday – the Bulgarian term used there, *narodnite buditeli*, literally means “the awakeners of the people”, and the historical period of the Bulgarian Enlightenment is termed *Vъзраждане*, literally “re-birth” (or, in French, “renaissance”). However, in the Bulgarian shared memory of the *Vъзраждане* period metaphors of light (and escape from darkness) are still, not unexpectedly, common. The most famous line in Stojan Michajlovski's 1892 poem “Cyril and Methodius”, also called “the Bulgarian school hymn” and sung on May 24 as well as on November 1, opens with the couplet “March, reborn nation / On to a bright future”, and its perhaps most quoted couplet goes “Forward! Science is a sun / That shines in our souls”. The national poet Ivan Vazov's celebrated poem “Paisij”, dedicated to one of the earliest of the “national awakeners”, the monk Paisij, ends with describing how Paisij “was then secretly throwing through the darkness / The first spark of the people's consciousness”.

Torch processions, however, are ambiguous – they could also express the metaphor *a flame is dangerous*: in the historical film *Boris the First* (1984) a torch procession is associated with a boyar rebellion.¹⁷ This might be intended or not

¹⁶ Walter 2001: 505.

¹⁷ Nikolova 2000: 145.

when nationalistically inclined political parties and groups organise torch processions for their causes: protest against the 1919 treaty of Neuilly-sur-Seine, which required Bulgaria to cede parts of its territory,¹⁸ or the controversial “march of mourning” in honour of General Lukov, the leader of the right extremist Union of Bulgarian National Legions in the 1930s and 1940s.¹⁹

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THE IMAGE OF THE HIGHWAYMAN JURAJ JÁNOŠÍK.

Slovak national hero or bandit?

The fact that the title of this paper strongly recalls the name of a comprehensive book on the phenomenon of highwaymen in the folklore of the Carpathian Region¹ is not a matter of chance. Though the question asked by the title does not represent, of course, only a folkloric problem. It is closely interlinked with national myths, historic processes of nationalism and with the relation among folk traditions, folklore and politics, which has a special meaning for the history of states in Central and Eastern Europe. Representational practices using the folklore either in the ethnical or political form – with the aim to strengthen the national consciousness – have been very often related to the exertion of power.²

The question whether Jánošík is a Slovak national hero or a bandit has kept appearing in the public political discourse also in the 21st century. Historic figure of the highwayman leader Juraj Jánošík, Slovak “Robin Hood” (born 1688 in Terchová, executed in Liptovský Mikuláš in 1713), is known from the Slovak, Polish as well as Moravian folklore. In Poland and in Moravia the figure of Jánošík features as a microregional (Moravia) and regional hero (Polish part of the Carpathians, Podhale, settled by the subethnic group of Gorals). However, in Slovakia it was his heroic myth besides the one on Great Moravia, which is considered to be the “golden era of the nation” (9th century AD), that acquired the most significant meaning in culture. It was the romantic literature that contributed in particular to the origin and spread of this myth. And the romantic poets of the 19th century converted the legendary outlaw into the national hero.³

In the paper I am going to concentrate on the ways of the Jánošík’s myth usage in media on the axis “hero – antihero”. It is based on the public political discourse in the 1st decade of the 3rd millennium in Slovakia. I will use the term folklore in the meaning of “historically determined cultural phenomenon” that: 1. nowadays represents an almost closed historic chapter (part of the cultural heritage); 2. is the vehicle of a specific, inherently differentiated style.⁴ Presented material shall test the general statement of Stuart Hall who assumes that in the historic perspective the meaning and the mass media way of folklore reading have been changing with time. According to him, the folklore overtime has not kept on one “correct” stable meaning.⁵ If the folkloric elements are used in the political life, they are

1 Gašparíková et al. 2002.

2 Danglová 2010: 29.

3 Goszczyńska 2003: 7.

4 Kiliánová 2006: 284; Danglová 2010: 30.

5 Hall 1997: 6.

usually operatively updated, ideologically formed, modified depending on a particular historic situation.⁶

Jánošík as a hero

Polish slovakist Joanna Goszczyńska pointed out that in the 19th century majority of folk and literary rendering of Jánošík come from his birthplace, in Slovakia. Researches prove that in this country Jánošík has been considered as the cultural code of Slovak identity. It is present in two basic forms: 1. as a strong Slovak national hero; 2. as a symbol of "social uprising". Jánošík as a positive figure, national hero or rebel was made popular not only by literature but later on, since 1920s, especially by numerous film adaptations (silent film of Siakel' brothers)⁷ and other forms of fine art and mass media production of various kinds. In the period of socialism the myth was very appropriate for the ideological scheme of a "state governed by people" or "state of workers and farmers." (Fig. 1: the most famous film *Jánošík – Paľo Bielik* – in the film by the Czech director Martin Frič, 1935. As a "strong hero", he became a model for the picture on a cheese box from the period of socialism: Fig. 2.)

The leader of a band of outlaws has been also a frequent subject of caricatures, after the fall of the Iron Curtain a subject of comic strips but also of pre-election and post-election political speeches and slogans. In the open political discourse he became a substitutional topic of quarrels and discussions in the media or on the internet, either in serious as well as in comic, parodied way, from the untouchable idol of Slovak national myths to the topic of irony, self-irony and mockery. Comical portrayals of Jánošík theme (at first in form of parody, which was a reaction to the excessive ideologisation of Jánošík after 1948⁸) started to appear in the Slovak milieu from the mid-1960s. Either as the character in the *Fedor Vico* (Fig. 3) caricatures or as the topic (object) of popular theatre or TV sketches (comic scenes or dialogues) of the well-known and favourite comic couple Milan Lasica – Július Satinský.⁹ Already in that period "playing down" the Jánošík theme by means of humour was considered – especially by the representatives of totalitarian ideology – to be a political issue. In the so-called 'normalisation' years in Czechoslovakia – after the invasion of the State by the troops of the Warsaw Pact in August 1968 (i.e. in times of the return to socialism according to the Soviet

6 Hall 1997: 9.

7 Jánošík in the film: 1921: *Jánošík* – 1st Slovak feature film with US financing; director: Jaroslav Jerry Siakel'; 1935: *Jánošík* – Slovak and Czech film; director: Martin Frič; 1954 *Janosik* – 1st Polish cartoon film; director: Włodzimierz Haupe and Halina Bielińska; 1963: *Jánošík I-II* – two-part Slovak film; director: Paľo Bielik; 1974 *Janosik* – Polish film; director: Jerzy Passendorfer; 1974 *Janosik* – Polish 13-part TV series; director: Jerzy Passendorfer; 1976: *Zbojník Jurko* – Slovak cartoon film; director: Viktor Kubal; 1991: *Zbojník Jurošík* – Slovak 28-part cartoon TV series; director: Jaroslav Baran; 2009: *Jánošík – pravdivá história* – Slovak-Polish-Czech film; director: Agnieszka Holland and Kasia Adamik, Jánošík: Václav Jiráček (www.sk.wikipedia.org/wiki/Juraj_Jánošík#J.C3.1no.C5.A1.C3.ADK_vo_filme)

8 Pichler 2006.

9 Lasica-Satinský 1969.

model) protagonists of this line of Jánošík treatment were politically persecuted. Author of a series of caricatures on Jánošík theme used to publish in the humorous magazine *Roháč* from 1965. Complete serial was published in 1969 also as a book. However, the book was withdrawn, it even did not reach the distribution process and the author received a publishing ban. Later on, his caricatures were published again as a book with his commentaries.¹⁰ "Divadlo na korze", the stage of Lasica and Satinský, was closed in 1969 and both actors, humorists and authors, were banned to act and publish for some time.

Though from the broader historical perspective, allusions to the Jánošík myth have not always had a strictly dominant ethnical character, his function of the symbolic hero – though covering different connotations – frequently corresponds with nationalist dimension. Let us give an example from the 20th century – Slovak National Uprising that started in August 1944 as a part of the European antifascist resistance. Jánošík as a mythical hero and rebel served as a model for naming fighting guerrilla groups. Other example is from 1968, well known for the invasion of Soviet troops to Czechoslovakia. Citizens protesting against the invasion of the country used slogans supporting a unified attitude of Czechs and Slovaks to the movement of the so-called Prague Spring, which was an attempt to reform the "real socialism" in the country by the contemporary elites of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, such as "the Czech and Slovak make one *šík* (rank), Dubček is our Jánošík."¹¹

The image of Jánošík becomes a representative of numerous and very often contradicting meanings and values. Beginning with heroic romantic and strong warrior fighting the injustice and oppression (in accordance with apologetic and defensive perception of Slovak history and collective memory,¹² reflected also in the folklore (Fig. 4) to the fairy-tale and legend character, hero of folk glass paintings, proud self-portrayal of the Slovak, up to the law trespasser. National hero Juraj Jánošík appears to function as one of "les lieux de mémoire"¹³ e. g. also in the milieu of Slovak hockey players. At the Winter Olympic Games 2010 in Vancouver Slovak goalie had two pictures on his protective mask ("for good luck"): 1. one of the best Slovak goaltenders, successfully playing in the Czechoslovak hockey representation, Vladimír Dzurila; 2. the other one of Juraj Jánošík. As far as the sport commentators say, the mask is usually goalie's important amulet.

Portrayal of an antihero

In comic strips the antihero as a type of the character of the vision art (literature, film or comic strips – Fig. 5) can take the form – as it is well known – of a

¹⁰ Vico 2008.

¹¹ Alexander Dubček, of Slovak origin, was a leader of the reform movement, president of the Central Committee of the KSČ since 1967 – it had the seat in Prague – and a symbol of the Prague Spring.

¹² Nora 1990.

¹³ Nora 1990.

superhero. The same holds true also for Juraj Jánošík (Fig. 5).¹⁴ The term itself is treated especially in literary science and researches of the pop culture. In our paper we use the term more broadly as a literary or film type of an antihero, presenting specific characteristics (valid mainly in other contexts and genres). We draw inspiration from the reflection of an antihero as a result of the development of the character within the ambivalent image. It occurs in accordance with the changeability of images in a particular situation and context limited by time and space. In this framework the image is “overtured” from a very positive “national hero” to the negative pole of an ambivalent space of the image that has been encoded in the national mythology for a long time.¹⁵ At the same time, this kind of the antihero does not lack (although only in a latent form) a certain self-irony.

At the turn of millennium – especially in times of the Slovak society transformation – we can identify new meanings and contexts in the Jánošík image. Open forms of politicalization of this image are closely connected especially with ways of power assertion of populist politicians. The birth of the Jánošík antihero took place during government period of the leftist populist Prime Minister Róbert Fico (2006-2010). It was created as a reaction to a specific public political announcement and took up a growing negative attitude of a part of Slovak society (intellectuals in particular) as well as politicians towards folklore. That is to say, they consider the folklore to be an ideological tool of totality and backward anachronism.¹⁶ And here vigorously comes back into political and media environment Juraj Jánošík thanks to Fico’s statement of January 3rd 2008. This statement was issued in the context of official celebration of the 15th anniversary of the Slovak Republic (1st January 1993): “It is in January 2008 that we celebrate round anniversary of an important hero of the Slovak nation, Juraj Jánošík, upon whom the Slovak government look as a model”. Apart from nationalist, identificating and heroic line of his statement, Róbert Fico indirectly reminded of a publicly intelligible part of Jánošík myth that presents him as a fair rebel against feudal lords: “Jánošík robbed the rich and gave the loot to the poor” (allusion to the folklore). The statement was pronounced in the situation of several not properly scrutinised allegations of corruption and bribery scandals disclosed by media, in the light of which the potential voters could not find the activities of the then government coalition to be trustworthy.

In the perspective of our analysed topic this moment was important for several reasons. Following reactions of the public as well as media provoked strong emotive discussion in media, on the internet in particular. In this strongly politicalized discourse Jánošík myth proved the fact – which was stated in relation with several other images and myths, i.e. their potential to head towards ambivalent usage¹⁷ and changes.¹⁸ That explains also the usage of the image/myth by both sides of the opinion conflict.

14 Danglár and Taragel’ 2004.

15 Mannová 2005.

16 Krekovičová 2000.

17 Krekovičová 1998: 2005.

18 Hall 1997: 9.

One of the sides of the argument is represented by the much trumpeted wooden larger-than-life statue of Jánošík (Fig. 6). It was presented to the Prime Minister Fico by his partisan and author, amateur woodcarver from Kysuce (nearby Jánošík's birthplace, Terchová) in August 2008. After leaving the post in 2010 Róbert Fico had the statue – allegedly weighing 500 kg – transferred to his study in the seat of the party that he leads.

Reaction of the other side of the opinion spectrum to Fico's statement on Jánošík was not late to come (Fig. 7). The language of the then opposition journalists and politicians started to use a new phrase "band of highwaymen", or "Jánošík and his band" with a negative connotation ("highwayman" in the meaning of "robber"). It was used as a synonym to denote the then government and representatives of the governing coalition. A cartoonist of the liberal rightist daily SME – Shooty (Martin Šútovec) – promptly created a series of topical caricatures evoking the theme. They picture the prime minister either alone or as one of the coalition triple, i.e. in the company of the chairmen of coalition parties (together with Vladimír Mečiar and leader of nationalist Slovak National Party, Ján Slota, who was known for his very positive attitude to alcohol). They wear folk costumes from highland regions of Slovakia and usually resemble a band of highwaymen portrayed as a character "of robbers of large scale" (Fig. 8). Caricatures react to "hot" topics of the Slovak political scene and shift the Jánošík myth to a carnival image of an "antihero". Characters of chairmen of coalition parties became so popular that some of them were issued by the SME daily also in form of stickers (Fig. 9 sticker with the trio). Besides Fico the caricatures show also Mečiar in the costume of Jánošík – as a highwayman with a huge bag of stolen loot (allusion to several unexplained corruption scandals) and the nationalist Slota with a loot, big bottle and red "alcoholic" nose.

Prime Minister Fico portrayed as Jánošík carries also other meanings. They are encoded in the attributes of the highwayman hero and result from critical voices of opposition politicians and journalists and numerous disclosed scandals, behind which were to figure the Prime Minister. Very frequent was a picture of Fico drawn with an old-fashioned chest full of gold ducats (allusion to the corruption and clientelism in politics). However, it also recalls the opinion of the then opposition that Fico was an antireform politician. To take an example of gathering of several meanings let us present picture 10. Fico wears a red (ideologically coloured, i.e. "communist") hat and shirt. (Other portrayals show him with red tie, red face and body (hands).) He looks dangerous (with *valaška* and pistol in his hands) and jumps over a fire according to folklore glass paintings (allusion to folklore) with a cry: "Let's go robbing, my guys", which is a quotation of a well-known folk song. In the specific picture his hat is trimmed with five-pointed stars (code for the socialist totality). Instead of stars other pictures use different

unambiguous symbols, crossed sickle and hammer. From the upper part of the hat a red cap with a tassel is sticking out, which reminds of Santa Claus.¹⁹

Composition of presented caricatures by Shooty (Fig. 10) sometimes reminds of a caricature by Fedor Vico from the 1960s and 1970s. (Fig. 3). Both authors – though in their own specific and original way – refer from time to time to the significant portraying of Jánošík on glass paintings (allusion to folklore), that are interesting by the fact that they focused – in essence – only on two areas of topics. From the beginning of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th centuries they were dominated by religious motives and besides them one can also find portrayals of Jánošík and his band. Larger thematic range started to be used only later, during the 20th century mainly in the naïve work of known authors. The picture of Jánošík jumping over the fire has been so well-known and frequent that some parents with a sense of humour included it into family photographs of their children and grandchildren (Fig. 11).

Usage of the mythical figure of Jánošík in the political communication in the meaning of an “antihero” continued also at the end of Fico’s government. In 2010 it even contributed to an essential political change, to the victory of the coalition of middle-rightist parties in the parliament elections. A selection of Shooty’s caricatures appeared on numerous billboards, financed by a public collection as a publicity for the then opposition of parliament parties. Text of the 2009 billboard for the newly established liberal-rightist political party “Sloboda a solidarita” (SAS, Freedom and Solidarity) was a direct reaction to Róbert Fico’s statement on Jánošík as a model of Slovak government (Fig. 12): “Slovakia does not need Jánošíks but experts.” With lightning speed the SAS party gained preferences of a serious political player. In the parliament elections they ended as the 3rd most successful party with more than 12 % votes. As a part of rightist coalition they became a government party for the current election period.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we can point out that: potential perceptions of the Jánošík myth and of the Juraj Jánošík image as a hero appear to be open and changeable. Views on Jánošík and his “emerging” between the folklore and mass media (from the folk hero depicted on the glass paintings or folk narratives via national hero in literature and national myths up to an alternative antihero), but also between the politics and arts, or politics and its reflection in political commentaries and news articles, caricature etc. – all of them confirm the opinion of Stuart Hall quoted in the introduction.²⁰

¹⁹ This is an allusion to the populism of the politician who lavishly “distributed” from the state budget as if it had been his property. On one hand there were Christmas 13th old-age pensions for the poorest pensioners amounting to 30 euros, on the other much more generous gifts to “his” people and businessmen.

²⁰ Hall 1997: 9.

Presented material confirms the hypothesis that individual forms of the hero are (in spite of national-mythological emphasis clearly dominant since 19th century) determined by a specific context.

Instrumentalisation of the Jánošík heroic myth on the axis "hero – antihero", contradictory from an axiological point of view, is related, among others, also to a tendency of mental images towards ambivalency, which are part of the historic memory, it can be proved also by other researches.²¹

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Fig. 1. Paľo Bielik as Jánošík in the film (1935)



Fig. 2. Cheese box with the picture of Jánošík according to the film by Paľo Bielik



Fig. 3. Caricature by Fedor Vico (1960s and 1970s)



Fig. 4. Period image of "suffering Slovaks" from the 1st Slovak Republic (1939–1945), according to the book cover *Mýty naše slovenské* (2005)



Fig. 5. Comic strips on Jánošík – book cover by Taragel – Dangler



Fig. 6. Wooden statue of Jánošík, present to the Prime Minister Robert Fico (in 2008) from one of his voters



Fig. 7. Caricature of the Prime Minister Robert Fico as a populist Jánošík – in the background a so-called “valaška”, an arm of shepherds and highwaymen



Fig. 8. Caricature of the leaders of governing parties as highwaymen with loot



Fig. 9. Caricature of the representatives of the coalition triple



Fig. 10. Sticker of the triple of the leaders of the then political parties in power



Fig. 11. Fico as Jánošík jumping over the fire



Fig. 12. Maxijánošík – grandchild of Arne Mann (Roma studies specialist at Institute of Ethnology SAS in Bratislava)



Fig. 13. Billboard SAS from 2009–2010

A POSTMODERN HERO
IN HUNGARIAN SOCIAL MEDIA.
AMBRUS ATTILA,
THE “HUNGARIAN ROBIN HOOD”.
A comparative analysis of the “IWIW” profiles
of the “Whisky Robber”¹

Attila Ambrus is a world-wide known celebrity. Charged of breaking into 28 financial institutions, he was convicted in 1999 to 17 years of imprisonment. He was born in Csíkszereda / Miercurea-Ciuc in 1967 and he left Romania in 1988. Although he had been a cheered ice hockey player already at home, then consecutively in several Budapest teams, he started a very particular career in 1993 that came to an estimated income between 400,000 and 800,000 dollars.²

The iWiW (International Who is Who) is a worldwide social networking website used by Hungarians, where three personal profiles could be found arrogated to Ambrus (or at least registered under his name).³ Two of these are of great importance for us; both were created in 2007 and contain identical photo material up to 70%, with different titles of the pictures. While the first profile called hereafter “I, the Hungarian Robin Hood”, is linked to 20,164 acquaintances in May 2009,⁴ the second one has 2,487 acquaintances.⁵ There is another, third profile, which is of a little importance, with a single picture, linked to only by 538 persons, being created only 2008.⁶

We consider the concomitant presence of three very similar personal profiles created by the same person (at least in the eyes of the visitors and buddies) in a single social media platform an extraordinary, even *unique* opportunity for comparative research in new media visual analysis and discourse interpretation. Since our main interest lies in the public perception of a media celebrity as reflected in the online social media, our primary research question may be formulated as follows: why have only the photos and titles on one profile – the one containing the photo titled “I, the Hungarian Robin Hood” – produced a coherent and

1 This study is the further development of a lecture presented at the „Literary Studies and Social Sciences” panel at the First International Conference on Discourse, Culture and Representation; organized by the Humanist Sciences Department of the Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania, Miercurea Ciuc Faculty on 24. 04. 2010, showing the results of a research project started in 2009.

2 Nadkarni 2000.

3 As of 24 April 2010 – the situation involved three IWIW Ambrus-profiles – all registered in 2007; the “main” profile with 20.164 acquaintances; the second one with 2487 acquaintances, the last one had 538 acquaintances.

4 The profile was deleted sometime in the first half of 2011.

5 In April 2012 the profile had 2912 acquaintances.

6 In April 2012 the profile had even less acquaintances: only 401 buddies remained.

convergent pro-Ambrus discourse, in spite of his decreasing popularity since 1999 when 75% of the population of Hungary was still backing him?⁷ Do the majority of pictures and comments in the virtual reality suggest an actual living sympathy in offline social reality? In evaluating the possible answers we proposed the following hypotheses to be checked: 1. photos and their titles determine the tone of the comments, as well as the content of the discourse; 2. most of the comments are pro-Ambrus; 3. the discourse is prevailed by a tone against police, state and its agents; 4. commenters are mostly low qualified. If our hypotheses got confirmed, that would point to a still living popularity of Attila Ambrus in some segments of present Hungarian society.

Contemporary heroes are often created or featured by popular media,⁸ including social media as well – however we have to bear in mind that these personalities are rarely genuine heroes in the classical sense of the term, but rather ephemeral idols of the day, or bubble celebrities. Still, these celebrity-heroes, just as their original counterparts (martyrs, saints, heroes), are expressions of a real social need: a need for ethical models overcoming hardships, succeeding in life.⁹ Even ill-famed notorieties may rise to the status of such modern heroes as the eighteenth-nineteenth century “social bandits”,¹⁰ like Sándor Rózsa or Jóska Sobri¹¹ in folklore and romantic literature, up to contemporary post-modern bandits, as exemplified by Bonnie and Clyde, or in our case: Attila Ambrus, the “Whisky Robber”. Narratives formed around these individuals can turn into anecdotes, legends, myths re-enforcing the hero-stance of the given personalities – and often diminish, euphemize or even drop the negative aspects, elements of the protagonists’ stories.¹²

Such hero stories are mythologized and propagated with predilection by media and public opinion alike. Social media, being a raw and primary platform for public debates and discourses, offer an optimal home for modern mythologies (in the Barthian sense).¹³ Any hero myths can blossom freely – in very similar ways as in folklore –, taking advantage of the multimedia and interactive opportunities offered by the world-wide-web. In social networking sites however, given the nature of the platform, these myths appear not as long elaborated narratives, but very fragmented: in brief descriptions, images, statements, comments, short performative expressions, or signs. Still, in these shatters the myth formed around the hero is reflected kaleidoscope-like, in continual change and sometimes only in vague allusions.

7 Csepeli and Mátay 2001.

8 Császi 2002; Povedák 2011.

9 Povedák 2010, 2011.

10 Cf. Eric Hobsbawm’s term developed in *Primitive Rebels* (1959, 1974) and *Bandits* (1969) referred by Csepeli – Mátay (2001) and Povedák 2011.

11 Sándor Rózsa and Jóska Sobri were famous 19th century Hungarian outlaws (*betyárs*), the latter being interpreted by Csepeli and Mátay’s study as a prototype for Attila Ambrus.

12 Cf. Povedák 2010.

13 Barthes 1983. cf. Kapitány – Kapitány (2001) regarding modern “mythologies”, and their criticism of Barthes’ use of the term.

For our present investigation we are interested in such fragmentary elements of the mythic discourse formed around Attila Ambrus, the “Whisky Robber” as it appear reflected in two of his three individual profiles on the IWIW social networking site. We have chosen for analysis 8 pictures, some (6) of them appearing in both profiles, others only on the first (1) or on the second one (1), together with the titles and the comments attached to them. In our research methodology we used Barthian semiotic analysis in interpreting photos and their titles, while concerning the comments we made use of speech-acts analysis and *computer mediated discourse analysis* (CMDA).

Semiotic visual analysis

Considering the Attila Ambrus photos to be investigated we can notice a general rule: as opposed to the overall trend of posting personal (or personally taken) photographs onto one’s own profile, these pictures uploaded to the Ambrus profiles originate mainly from press photos.¹⁴ Another characteristic of these pictures is that they represent Ambrus in appearances that do not easily allow a single coherent or typical image: he appears either with long or short hair, or bold, and/or with long or short beard, or shaved face – according to the circumstances in which the pictures were taken by the photo reporters (cameramen).

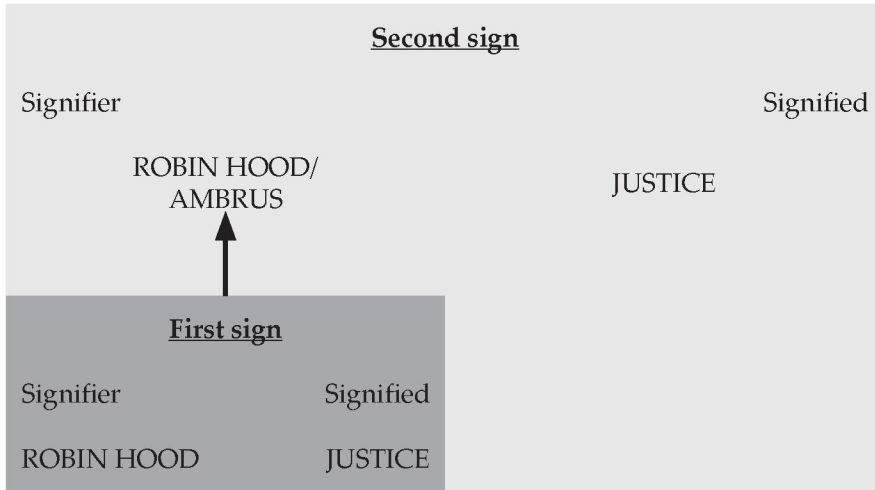
Still, from another aspect, for a valid interpreting of the photos and their titles in terms of the Barthian semiotic analysis, we consider that all the photos can be interpreted as similar except one, with title: “I, the Hungarian Robin Hood”, that has a special status. Being an evident photoshopped image, this picture differs from the others because it was used as a visual *simile*¹⁵ explicitly comparing Attila Ambrus, the “Whisky Robber” with one of his prototypes, namely Robin Hood, thus contributing to the romantic myth of the good brigand.

This image, taken as sign, is “strange” to the effect that it explicitly expresses the signified of the new sign *also* through its title, as “I, the Hungarian Robin Hood”, partly because of the presence of the first sign. The picture – in fact, a Photoshop collage – is divided in two parts. The first one typifies Robin Hood himself as represented in the 1938 black-and-white movie (played by Errol Flynn), the second one presents Ambrus Attila wearing a similar hat and with a wriggling snake around his neck and on his hand.

Let us have a look at how the old sign has transformed in the new one! Signifying the justice in denotation system the first sign has as its signifier Robin Hood. In spite of robbing the rich, he has been considered to be not a villain but a benefactor of the poor (at least, this is what the legend says).

14 After a brief exploratory search we have easily discovered the originals, or at least possible sources of some profile pictures in the online archives of the MTI (the Hungarian Press Agency), or such news portals like www.index.hu; www.celebcenter.hu; www.dunaujvarosonline.hu; www.havasvideoblog.hu – some of them even earlier than the creation date of the IWIW-profiles (2007).

15 Or *similitudo* = comparison – a trope borrowed from the fields of rhetoric and stylistic. However, as we will see below, the collage was originally meant not as comparison but rather as an antithesis.



1. flow chart: The first sign becomes the signifier of the second sign.

This sign, namely Robin Hood, the man who represented justice in the days of long-ago – in Barthian conception: the unity between signifier and signified – becomes by Ambrus signifier in the connotation system. It refers to justice also in 1999, namely to the robbing of bankers (the rich), but without mentioning the fact that the signified – justice – has nothing to do with helping the poor.¹⁶

The old sign, i.e. Robin Hood, has been uprooted from its historical context, put in another one and thus changed to a *mythical*-ideological sign. The above semantic process is built upon a rhetorical syllogism:

Greater premise: Robin Hood was an embodiment of justice.

Minor premise: Ambrus is like Robin Hood.

Consequence: Ambrus is an embodiment of justice.

This argument identifying Ambrus with justice through an analogy with Robin Hood – reinforced even more explicitly by the title of the picture: “I, the Hungarian Robin Hood” – contributes to his positive image and thus to the myth

¹⁶ It is probable enough that this profile has not been created by Ambrus himself. In a video clip on his MySpace profile he reflects on the attitude which compares him with Robin Hood calling attention to the fact that he had never donated money to the poor. Even if he does not consider himself Robin Hood, “his” IWIW-profiles remain important due to their created social reality, especially the profile with the title: “I, the Hungarian Robin Hood”.

of the good bandit,¹⁷ giving birth to a biasing attitude among people. They were supporting Ambrus during his prison-breaking as if he had not robbed their own deposits banks as well!

As we have just mentioned, during his 3 months loose after his prison-breaking from a maximum security prison, Ambrus' popularity reached an almost incredible popularity: 75% of Hungary's population supported him against the police. Although this attitude was due to several factors – such as his alleged politeness – two of them should be at least emphasized. The attitude in point, on the one hand, is attributable to the antipathy to police and bankers.¹⁸ For instance, it is a notorious fact, say the authors of the referred article that Gábor Princz, former president of the *Postabank* has been indicted by the new government in 1999, being charged with damages to the Hungarian state reaching up to 158 billion forints (Ambrus robbed "only" around 120 million forints...). On the other hand, the police in the former Eastern European Countries have been very unpopular, and probably this is one of the main causes why the majority of the population began to sustain the "gentleman"¹⁹ robber after his escape from prison.²⁰ Just to imagine the impotence of the police in some situation at that time, consider the case when the TV-reporter had arrived onto the scene of the bank peeled by Ambrus earlier than the police.

Although Csepeli and Mátyay's social-psychological analysis seems to be consistent with our semiotic analysis, our research question remains unanswered: why only the photos and titles on one profile – containing the photo titled "I, the Hungarian Robin Hood" – have produced a coherent, convergent, productive pro-Ambrus discourse? The answer to this question will be detailed in the following.

17 It is essential to notice that the picture was attributed to this meaning only on the IWIW profile. Originally, in the Index.hu article (<http://index.hu/belfold/viszkisamburu/>), from where most possibly was imported, it was displayed with the exactly opposite meaning. The inscription under the original picture is a quotation from the containing article itself pointing that while „Robin Hood shared the pillage among the people; our whisky man fribbled it away on journeys, skirts and distraction“. The montage was probably set together to express this contrast: on one side the gentle hero and on the other the venturing juggler (emphasized by the snake around his neck and arm: a symbol of evil and danger – probably taken on one of his "exotic journeys"). Considering the fact that neither Ambrus himself identifies with Robin Hood, it is very likely that the main profile, where this picture figured, was not created him. (Unfortunately neither case may be confirmed, since we could not contact him, although we have tried repeatedly.)

18 Csepeli and Mátyay 2001.

19 Ambrus behaved in the last three months as a gentleman. He was not only courteous, but he was using a bolted language, offering at the same time flowers to the women sitting at the customer service. Naturally, this kind of "politeness", the lack of physical aggression does not mean he was not making use of psychical violence! During his last robberies he was becoming more violent – perhaps due to the much of whisky consumed and to the stress – once even firing his gun at a female bank employee. In the secondary connotative system of the sign the details about his violence have disappeared.

20 Csepeli and Mátyay 2001.

Rhetorical and visual computer mediated discourse analysis (CMDA)

In interpreting the language used by the actors on the Ambrus' IWIW-profile, we can use – along other processing methods, like applied speech acts theory, or textual and visual rhetorical analysis – the literature review on *computer mediated discourse analysis* (CMDA). We refer here, for example, to the categories concerning the “away messages” of the communication on instant messaging platforms described by Herring.²¹ The labels of the 12 pictures and most likely also the comments posted by the acquaintances, as well as the acquaintances' acquaintances (as we are linked to Ambrus) represent a special form of communication. Since the profile does not assure a real time conversation,²² this kind of communication is unidirectional. However, it creates a space for a discourse/message change among people on the same theme, respectively themes.

As in the case of “away messages” described by Herring comments on social networking sites can be defined as being *asynchronous*, *single-channel (text)* and *short* messages. An important distinction, however, should be made: unlike the case of “away messages”, the author of a comment cannot control how long his or her message will remain visible on the profile. Thus, through these unidirectional and asynchronous messages, no real dialogue is performed, but rather a kind of ritual deliberation,²³ with the convergent (or sometimes divergent) comments forming a relatively coherent discourse together with the pictures and their titles to which they are attached. We consider that doing comparative research on three very similar personal profiles created by the “same person” is probably a *unique possibility* for researchers to measure the impact of a picture and/or its title, and consequently of the personal image built up from these pictures and their comments.²⁴

During our semantic-pragmatic analysis we use the categorization borrowed from Herring and used also by Nastri, Peña and Hancock (2006) in their article concerning the “away messages”. The former article is based, in fact, on Austin's typology (1962), respectively on Searle's classification (1969) of the speech acts²⁵. In addition to their well-known basic speech acts, we have proposed a new one, that we consider indispensable for our analysis focused on the profiles in point, namely the “qualificative” or “emotional-verdictive”.²⁶

21 Herring 2001.

22 At the time of the comments were originally posted the chat function had not yet been available, or not yet general within the IWIW platform.

23 Cf. Howard 2010.

24 We presumed originally that none of these IWIW profiles were created by Attila Ambrus himself, still it seems that the profile with around 2500 acquaintances (with ID no. 10073451).

25 We have borrowed the table below with the Austinian categories completed with Searlian ones from Jacqueline Nastri and Jorge Peña (2006).

26 Resembling somewhat to Amante's *affective speech act*, elaborated in his theory of ironic speech acts (1981)

Speech-acts	Properties	Example
Representative/ assertive	Statements of fact, getting the viewer to form or attend to a belief	"At the library," "I have class until 5 today," "out"
Directive	The sender uses this to get the receiver to do something (i.e. a command)	"call me," "pick me up at 8," "call the cell"
Promissive	The sender commits himself to do something	"be back at 5," "I'll meet you at 7," "bars all night"
Expressive	Sender expresses feeling towards the receiver	"I hate this weather," "School sucks," "I love Fridays"
Effective	To change an institutional state of affairs	"You're fired," "Play ball," "Chapter at 7 or you're fined"
Verdictive	To determine what is the case in an institution	"I find him innocent," "strike"
Citing	The message is not originally produced by the sender	"Do or do not, there is no try," "And she's buying a stairway to heaven"
Qualificative / emotional- verdictive	Subjective statement like the expressive act, but contains evaluation and affection; differs from the effective and verdictive acts by the lack of authority to change status of an object or person.	"You are the king!"; "You are the God!" "You are guilty!"

As mentioned earlier, in interpreting the *evolution of a discourse* we should take into account firstly the character, the content and the title of a picture. Concerning their labels we analyze whether they are *provocative* with ideological connotations as in the case of "I, the Hungarian Robin Hood". In respect to the comments, they have been divided according to speech-acts, mostly into two categories: "qualificative" and "expressive" ones. Because these kinds of speech-act categories are not able to express sympathy or antipathy to Ambrus: the comments should be classified still in *pro-Ambrus* and *anti-Ambrus* acts.²⁷

The first profile picture shows a long-haired Ambrus wearing a black-and-white patterned prison suit, sitting behind a Plexiglas wall; looking at and listening to his interlocutor. (The title could be translated also as "I'm listening".) Although this first picture "produced" through its title only three comments, we

²⁷ Having in mind another classification of Austin (1962), the investigated titles attached to the photos may be interpreted as *provocative* from *illocutionary* aspect, while the comments represent the *perlocutionary* effect, and as such may be considered as positive or negative reactions to those illocutions.

have classified it as “provocative”. It has been understood in different ways by the commenters, but all of them refer to it as if it were an interrogation (in spite of the fact that very likely the person in front of Ambrus is not a police officer, but Julian Rubinstein – the author of the book *Ballad of the Whiskey Robber*). All of the speech-acts are pro-Ambrus, three of them are “qualificative” (e.g. “the greatest!!! The Panther of Csík rules!!!!” – male, 25) and the other three “expressive” ones (e.g. “I have been interrogated by the cops as well! I hate them all. They are the biggest criminals, traitorous dogs!” – female, 29).

The same picture appears also on the second Ambrus profile (the one with 2400 acquaintances) with another title – “sometimes I’m still interrogated”. Albeit the title in point is more provocative, it has not produced any comments. Taking into account this fact, we can formulate a critical question concerning the relation between the provocative titles/pictures and the number, as well as the content of comments. Why do not appear more comments on the profile with this more provocative title? In order to answer this question we have to take also into consideration the great number – 20,000 – of visitors of the first profile in comparison with the second one.²⁸ Anyway, *the discourse emerging on the first profile can be interpreted as a coherent organic whole*. It must be investigated whether the hypothesis from the beginning of the study concerning the “provocative” photos and “expressive” or “qualificative” speech-acts are plausible.

We consider that the next photo of the “main profile”, titled “I, Robin Hood of the Hungarians” – already analyzed from semiotic aspect – is provocative as well. Maybe the connotative message of this collage is so obvious that all visitors who made comments have thought of the same persons, namely Ambrus and Robin Hood, praising Ambrus by both expressive and “qualificative” speech-acts: “you’re the king” – male, 25; “hats off before you!!!!!!” – male, 43; “this photo I like as well” – female, 29.

The next photo, with provocative title is photo number 5 on the main profile, representing a shaved-face Ambrus behind bars, entitled “I’ll be freed in 2009 for my good conduct”. This picture is also the main photo of the profile. While the photo on this profile resulted in 35 comments with this title, this same photo with another title (“in my opinion this is the best photo of me”) on the other profile with only 2400 acquaintances produced only 7 comments. We consider the title on the second profile ambiguous but not provocative at all.

The speech-acts from the “Robin Hood”-profile are generally dominated by the expressive and qualificative speech-acts as stated in the hypothesis. Directive speech-acts are also frequent on the profile (e.g. “...if ‘these’ let you out, look me up.” – female, 35; and similar invitations). We consider it interesting that one single person has written all 7 anti-Ambrus comments (e.g. “Still you shouldn’t idol a common criminal, who stands up as Robin Hood; the difference is that Robin Hood indeed gave the money to the poor... Attila Ambrus in turn, went

28 On the second profile with approximately 2400 (2912 in April 2012) acquaintances the author (Ambrus?) warns us that someone has registered in his name, and he invites the acquaintances of acquaintances to join him as friends.

holidaying to-and-fro, and spent most of the money to save his hide!" – female, 29). All other comments from the three categories are pro-Ambrus:

Directive speech-acts		Expressive speech-acts		Qualificative speech-acts		Representative/Assertive speech-acts	Promissive speech-acts	Citing speech-acts
Pro Ambrus:	Anti-Ambrus:	Pro-Ambrus:	Anti-Ambrus:	Pro-Ambrus:	Anti-Ambrus:	Pro-Ambrus:	Pro-Ambrus:	Pro-Ambrus:
22	0	22	7	18	0	8	2	3

We consider the next photo, entitled "my clothes", also provocative. In the profile with 2400 acquaintances the same photo is titled "I'll be freed in 2010" and it produced the most comments on that profile. He appears on this photo with moustache and Spanish beard. The clothes he is wearing are not street wear, but, of course, prison suit. The connotation of the expression "my clothes" makes reference to other aspects of the context which Ambrus finds himself, a mythical-ideological sign, which is interpreted by the commentators in 5 expressive (e.g. "I also hate that pepper-and-salt shirt! !!!" – male, 25; "These clothes should be given rather to the rogue politicians. How nice they would show on Gyurcsány [very unpopular Hungarian prime-minister at that time], like a festive suit.!!!!" – female, 29), 11 qualificative (e.g. "This is a formidably sexy photo!" – female, 37; "I think, you're a tough guy! – male, 32) and only 1 directive speech act (HI, Attila! I'm very glad that you will be freed for you good conduct this year, I'm glad, it's over... Deep in the heart anybody would happily rob a bank, only that not everybody is as daring as You are! Tom y heart's content, I would rob even two. Anyways, I beg you, if You'll be out, keep your hands off the OTP [Bank], because I've got some money in there!!! My warm thanks! – female, 34).

The 11th photo on the main profile is labeled: "I did nothing wrong to anybody" – showing him with fancy beard, still in civilian clothes, speaking and vividly gesturing with his hands, probably in the course of an interview or interrogation. The photo in question can be also found on the profile with 2400 acquaintances with the same title but it produced only two comments, both being pro Ambrus. This picture and its title attract a total number of 16 commentators and comments on the main profile. We can observe looking at the table nr. 3 that the dominant speech acts are the expressive ones, while directive, qualificative and assertive speech acts may be found as well. There are only 2 anti-Ambrus commentators, so the discourse formed around this photo is dominated by the pro Ambrus attitude.

Directive speech-acts		Expressive speech-acts		Qualificative speech-acts		Representative/ Assertive speech-acts		Promissive speech-acts	Citing speech-acts
Pro-A.	Anti-A.	Pro-A.	Anti-A.	Pro-A.	Anti-A.	Pro-A.	Anti-A.	Pro-A.	
6	2	22	2	8	4	5	4	1	0

For now we can conclude that among the comments to the photos with provocative titles, with mythical-ideological connotations we can identify a lot of qualificative, expressive, directive and assertive speech acts. Three from these categories – qualificative, expressive and assertive – are the most frequent within the discourses of provocative photos and labels because they may pertain to the instruments of argumentation or legitimization of some – or in general any – mythologies/ideologies.

In the next paragraphs we will analyze some photos and comments considered non-provocative in order to compare the number and orientation – pro-Ambrus or anti-Ambrus – of these speech acts to the provocative ones. We suppose that the speech acts characteristic to the photos with non-provocative hints and titles produce less qualificative and assertive anti-Ambrus speech acts.

The first photo of which comments we intend to analyze is titled: “handsome” – it shows Ambrus shaved, in black shirt. The comments resulting from this picture are written by 6 persons. They contain 2 expressive (e.g. “You’re such an Italian style guy here! I would accept you for my mate – female, 35), 4 qualificative (e.g. ...You’re the King, Attila!!!!!! :) – female, 25) and 1 directive (e.g. “Don’t give it up, and good luck for when you’ll be out!!! – female, 27), all of them – as we have supposed above – pro Ambrus.

Another analyzed photo: “Me” – shows Ambrus long bearded, in elegant black suit, grey shirt and white tie: in this case too, we can draw almost the same conclusion considering the above mentioned hypothesis. We can find only 3 comments referring to this photo: three qualificative and two expressive speech acts (e.g. “You look here like a lawyer!” – female, 35 “bearded men are most trustworthy” – male, 27), all of them being pro-Ambrus. Interestingly enough, this same picture on the second profile (with 2400 acquaintances) is labeled with a rather provocative title: “Sometimes we must be serious”, still it attracted no comments at all. Of course, we would like to emphasize once again that on this profile there are 16,000 less acquaintances than on the so called “Robin Hood” profile.

The last photo we analyzed bore a non-provocative title: “still in Romania”, – In this picture we can see Ambrus very young, on his knees on the ice, in hockey guise. Six comments and 14 speech acts refer to this photo: 5 representative, 6 expressive and 1 directive speech act; all of them are pro Ambrus. We can find this same photo on the profile with 2,487 acquaintances as well, but it produced only one comment.

As we supposed in our above formulated hypothesis the speech acts characteristic to the non-provocative photos and hints have produced less speech acts of

qualificative and assertive anti-Ambrus type, a hypothesis supported partially by the information from the other Ambrus profile.

Conclusions

Our hypotheses were confirmed by our findings: photos and the titles dominantly determine the content and the tone of the comments. Also, we observed that the discourse is prevailed by a tone against police, state and its agents. Most of the comments are pro-Ambrus, sympathizing with the "Whisky Robber". Commenters are mostly low qualified: most of them, approximately 30%, have secondary school, the rest graduated from vocational high schools (excepting one with post-high school studies, and two other with college).

As we have seen from our findings and their interpretations, there is still a widespread pro-Ambrus attitude, at least in the mirror of his iWiW-profiles on the social media. Also, we can conclude that this positive attitude towards him is not independent from the provocative "Robin Hood-Ambrus" montage picture and the similarly provocative tags or titles attached to his pictures on the main profile. Due to this challenging character of the profile, the responses came forth more prominently, and the overwhelmingly positive majority of the comments in the virtual reality suggest an actual living sympathy in offline social reality as well. Apart from the common stance against police and state (authorities), the comments evidence a deep ideological confusion described by Povedák – these personages serve as identification models for some social strata. "Contemporary heroes offer a kind of mythology, which suggest that the individual success is achievable for anyone. Whether by robbing, or by extreme actions, or extravagant outlook, or destructive behavior."²⁹ This belief, attitude and ideological confusion among the sympathizers of Ambrus is clearly evident from the frequent expressive comments, like "I've been keeping crossing my fingers for you. But sadly you didn't play this game well up to end. 'Cos if I would have been you, I'd have flown. So that they'd never got me. But what you did, you did it well." – coming from a 45 year old female; or another by a younger, 28 years old commenter: "When I was a girl, I've kept fingers crossed, that they shouldn't catch you, and I got very sad when I heard in the news, I thought that this wasn't normal, but as I read here, I'm not the only one [feeling like this]. Don't give it up!"

29 Povedák 2010.

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FROM THE STANDS ONTO THE FRONTLINE. The Story of how Hooligans became Heroes

"Football is not just a simple game; it is a weapon of the revolution"

Ernesto Che Guevara

Introduction

In February 2011, the head of the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) Michel Platini met Serbian president Boris Tadić and warned him that Serbian authorities have one year to prove that they are doing everything in their powers to improve the safety on stadiums and end the war with hooligans.¹ Otherwise, Serbian national team and its football clubs will be banned from all international competitions.² This ultimatum was delivered in response to several serious hooligan-related incidents, most recently the deadly attack on a Toulouse fan, Brice Taton, in a Belgrade bar in 2009, and the riots in Genoa during the EURO 2012 qualifier between Italy and Serbia, which led to the game being abandoned just after the kick-off.³

Hooligan problems are hardly news for the Serbian state. Namely, the country has been plagued by the activities of organized football fan formations for nearly three decades. In this light, the paper will try to scrutinize the development of football hooligan groups in Serbia, as well as their claim to fame, that is the years preceding and during the wars of Yugoslav dissolution in the early 1990s. During that period, Serb hooligans, led by notorious criminal Željko Ražnatović Arkan, managed to elevate their status from "anti-social and destructive elements" to "true patriots and heroes" of the Serbian nation.⁴ However, before plunging into the particulars of the hooligan activities during the last years of the SFRY, providing a working definition of the term "football hooliganism" is essential, so as to maintain precision and clarity of arguments.

1 Barlovac, Bojana "UEFA Chief Warns Serbia, Croatia on Football Violence: *Balkan Insight*," *Balkan Insight*, February 25, 2011, <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/uefa-chief-visits-belgrade-to-warn-on-football-hooliganism>.

2 Barlovac, Bojana "UEFA Chief Warns Serbia, Croatia on Football Violence: *Balkan Insight*," *Balkan Insight*, February 25, 2011, <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/uefa-chief-visits-belgrade-to-warn-on-football-hooliganism.d>.

3 Nincic, Feodor "The Context behind Serbia's Football Hooligan Problem," *BBC Sport*, October 15, 2010, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/europe/9097434.stm>.

4 Ivan Čolović, "Od Delija do Tigrova," *Erasmus-časopis za kulturu demokratije*, no. 10 (1995): 61.

What is football hooliganism?

In order to propose an appropriate working definition of the term football hooliganism, brief history of the usage of the term, as well as the state of academic inquiry into the matter itself will be presented. The term hooligan derives from the name "Hoolihan" a particularly anti-social Irish family of who lived in East London in the 19th century.⁵ Starting with 1970s, media in Britain started using the label hooligans to signify the unruly football fans, who had previously been referred to as "ruffians" or "tear ways."⁶ Soon, violent football fans themselves have embraced the term hooligans and started using it to refer to those who commit acts perceived as notable or praiseworthy.⁷

Accordingly, Eric Dunning, one of the leading experts in the field of football studies, points out that "football hooliganism" is not primarily a social psychological or social scientific concept, but rather a construct of politicians and the media.⁸ However, since the onset, academic research on football hooliganism has been adversely affected by strong intra-academic rivalries. The academic debate was trapped amidst the arguments between "figurational," "anthropological," "ethnographic," and "psychological reversal theory" approaches to the study of football hooliganism.⁹ In addition, the studies of football fans' violence have been hampered by the wide scope of football fans' activities that were grouped under the term "football hooliganism".

Nevertheless, a recent article by Spaaij and Anderson, manages to break free from the entrenched debate and move beyond the largely fruitless academic struggles into a whole new realm.¹⁰ Namely, Spaaij and Anderson propose a concise yet comprehensive definition of football hooliganism as: "competitive violence among socially organized groups of soccer fans which is principally directed at opposing fans."¹¹ This definition is very useful in that it makes a clear distinction between spontaneous fan violence and organized forms of fighting, the latter of which qualify as hooliganism. Therefore, it implies that football hooligans are distinct from other football fans in that they are a part of a characteristic subculture whose major component is collective violence, pointed primarily against rival peers.¹² Hence, for the emergence and development of hooligan rivalries, there needs to exist at least two similar, yet opposing groups.

Moreover, the authors argue that football crowd disorder should be classified as either "issue-relevant" or "issue-irrelevant," depending on whether the origins of fan violence happen to be within the stadium or not.¹³ According to the

5 Marsh and Rosser and Harre 1980: 70.

6 Marsh and Rosser and Harre 1980: 70.

7 Marsh and Rosser and Harre 1980: 70.

8 Dunning 2000: 142.

9 Dunning 2000: 154.

10 Spaaij and Anderson 2010: 561-579.

11 Spaaij and Anderson 2010: 561-579.

12 Spaaij 2006: 12.

13 Spaaij and Anderson 2010: 567.

authors, large majority of the violence of football hooligans does not stem from “issue-irrelevant” or situational factors but rather from political, economic, social, and cultural contexts.¹⁴ Therefore, these contexts are crucial when trying to shed light on the processes that encourage or prevent football-related violence, and are as such responsible for determining the intensity and scale of violence.¹⁵ Accordingly, as one of the leading non-Marxist conflict theorists Randall Collins emphasizes, football hooliganism is “the most sophisticated form of sports violence,” since it is “organized in conjunction with a soccer match,” but “does not depend upon the events of the game in any way.”¹⁶ Thus, Collins further contends:

“Sports are contrived to generate moments of emotional entrainment and collective solidarity among the fans; hooligan violence is contrived to provide the entrainment and solidarity of fights, without being subordinate to the players. This violence emulates the combat structure of the game, with the hooligans raised into heroes in their own right, usurping the place of the athletes.”¹⁷

Evolution of organized football fandom in the former Yugoslavia

The dissolution of Yugoslavia and the bloody conflicts that accompanied it have ever since represented a popular and prolific topic for a great number of contemporary scholars. However, an important aspect of the preparations for the wars appears to be fairly neglected. Namely, although widely acclaimed at the time as ‘instances of exemplary patriotism’, activities of football clubs and fanatical football fans have been largely left out of the mainstream academic debate. This paper will attempt to fill the existing lacuna and account for the role of sport institutions and fan communities as part of the groundwork for the ensuing wars. In particular, an emphasis will be placed on the role of sports media as the main disseminators of a nationalist and militant ‘hype’ around football. Finally, the paper will try to establish certain facts about the leader of the most notorious Serb paramilitary formation, the Tigers, in order to capture a more general connection between the worlds of politics, crime and football.

Even a cursory analysis of the development of sports in Tito’s Yugoslavia reveals the existence of a strong bond between the ruling state authorities (read communist elites) and the leading football clubs. Similarly to other communist countries, the major state institutions in Yugoslavia were involved in the creation of the most successful and popular football clubs. Namely, the Yugoslav People’s Army (JNA) initiated the founding of *Partizan*, whereas the Ministry for Internal Affairs established Red Star, the most prominent Serbian club.¹⁸ The two major clubs in Croatia were *Hajduk Split* and *Dinamo Zagreb*, the former being Tito’s

14 Spaaij and Anderson 2010: 567.

15 Spaaij and Anderson 2010: 567.

16 Collins 2008: 315.

17 Collins 2008: 316.

18 Nielsen 2010.

favorite ever since the historical match in 1944, when *Hajduk* became the official Partisan army club, and the latter being founded in 1945 as the Croatian police's club, recognizable for its blue color.¹⁹

Not only did the official institutions establish the most successful clubs in the socialist Yugoslavia, but they were also taking active part in clubs' day-to-day activities. *Partizan* was dominating the Yugoslav football championship in the years after the war, mostly because the JNA generals recruited the best players from the country, regardless of their ethnicity.²⁰ Hence, traditionally, the bulk of *Partizan's* players were non-Serbs.²¹ In contrast, Red Star had very strong connections to the political elite of Socialist Republic of Serbia and significantly more Serbian players, so it gained an image of the 'true' Serbian club.²² This heritage was preserved into the 1980s, only to be abused masterfully as the recruiting basis for Milošević's regime's exploits.

Football supporters all over Yugoslavia wasted no time in picking up foreign trends and started forming various fan tribes soon after the WWII. Already in 1950, Yugoslavia got its first official fan club, *Torcida*, formed in Split to support *Hajduk*. *Torcida* is believed to be one of the oldest, if not the oldest, organized football fans' formation on the continent. However, the authorities discouraged this type of fan groups mostly due to their overt inclinations toward hooliganism and nationalistic connotations. Therefore, the activities of *Torcida* were quickly suppressed and the scale of havoc they cause can hardly be compared to its activities in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Moreover, as Spaaij and Anderson point out, in order for a football hooligan formation to exist, there needs to be at least another similar yet opposing formation. *Torcida* would have had to wait full two decades for the fans of another of the major clubs in the socialist Yugoslavia, *Partizan*, to create an official supporters group, or firm, which was named *Grobari* (the Grave-diggers). Because of this discontinuity, it is hard, if not impossible, to speak of linear development and the escalation of the phenomenon of football hooliganism in socialist Yugoslavia.

However, with the beginning of the 1980s, hooliganism in Yugoslavia started a whole new chapter, initiated by the re-establishment of *Torcida* in March 1980 and followed by other official football fan formations of the major football clubs. At that time, the most notorious football firms rose to prominence. In Croatia, long-suppressed *Torcida* re-emerged. Although *Partizan's* supporter group *Grobari* (the Gravediggers), was formed in 1970, its members had to remain largely underground until the 1980s when football related violence started being "manifested in the form of insults, incidents and conflicts on a so-called national basis."²³ *Bad*

19 Igor Stoimenov and Zoran Panjaković, *Fudbal, nogomet i još ponešto* [Football, Soccer and Something More], Documentary, 2007, episode 6.

20 Igor Stoimenov and Zoran Panjaković, *Fudbal, nogomet i još ponešto* [Football, Soccer and Something More], Documentary, 2007, episode 6.

21 Igor Stoimenov and Zoran Panjaković, *Fudbal, nogomet i još ponešto* [Football, Soccer and Something More], Documentary, 2007, episode 6.

22 Andrej Krickovic, "Football Is War," *Transitions Online* (March 15, 1999), <http://www.tol.org/client/article/5707-football-is-war.html?print>.

23 Čolović 2000: 380.

Blue Boys, named after the 1983 Sean Penn movie *Bad Boys*, the group supporting *Dinamo Zagreb*, and *Delije* (Red Star fans), were the late bloomers, founded only in 1986 and 1989 respectively as the bastions of Croatian and Serb nationalism.

With the upsurge of nationalism in the public sphere of Yugoslavia in the late 1980s, the antagonism of football fans' formations moves in the direction of national distinctions, resulting in the national homogenization of football fans' groups and increasing importance of the "fault lines."²⁴ Nevertheless, this process was not only grassroots, as presented in the media at the time, which can be proven by the example of notorious criminal Željko Ražnatović Arkan, who became was instructed by the State Security in 1989 to become leader of the Red Star fans.²⁵ At the same time, one could observe fewer and fewer serious incidents on the games between Red Star and *Partizan*, or *Dinamo* and *Hajduk*, whereas the games involving a Serb and a Croatian club seemed to be loaded with dynamite. In other words, the proof of allegiance to a club also incorporated a display of hatred and aggression against the fans from the other republics. As political messages became habitually displayed and chanted all around the country, politics began overtly to creep into the stadiums.

The names of the hooligan groups e.g. *Bad Blue Boys*, *Barbarians*, *Hordes of Evil*, *Gravediggers*, give a hint of the violent inclinations of the football fan formations. Moreover, huge flags, as well as "drumming sections" constituted of dozens or more of the instruments were becoming largely popular. However, the focal point of the fans' activities revolves around the use of firecrackers, tear gas, and other pyrotechnic accessories. What is more, the hooligans were rarely referring to foreign fans as their role-models, and the feeling of equality, if not superiority, was evident. Accordingly, the strong nationalistic focus in the activities of the football hooligan groups should not be surprising. For instance, *Torcida* did not use any foreign words on its banners, a decision explained by one of the leaders of the group in the following manner: "Why should we write English words on our banners, and hence admit their supremacy, when everybody knows that *Torcida* is the best firm in Europe. Let the English write in Croatian on their banners."²⁶

The creation of "Strongmen" and Arkan's claim to fame

As the hooligan groups rose to prominence in the 1980s, through violence as well as offensive and increasingly political messages, the media were quick to explicitly reprimand such behavior. Some even went as far as claiming that the hooligans on the stadiums are 'destroyers of everything progressive', 'bestial abusers of sport', 'barbarians'.²⁷ However, these dramatic idioms were almost exclusively reserved for the others, whereas one's own nationals were portrayed as simply

24 Marković 1990: 134.

25 Filip Švarn, "Arkanova ostavština," *Vreme* (Belgrade, January 14, 2010), http://www.mondo.rs/s158053/Press_izbor/Vreme-_Arkanova_ostavstina.html.

26 Marković 1990: 127.

27 Čolović 2000: 373–374.

responding excessively to the foreign provocations. Furthermore, as the press frequently employed military phrases to describe incidents on the stadiums, even people indifferent to football realized that stadiums could be used as free and effective mediums of transmitting political messages as well as a place where one could freely fight with the perceived opponents.

As Eric Dunning, one of the leading experts in the field of football violence argues, sensationalist media, by presenting the stadium as "the place where all the action is" plays a significant role in encouraging hooliganism.²⁸ As a consequence, he believes, such attitude promotes football into a "context for fighting."²⁹ Therefore, according to Dunning, dramatic newspaper reports which call for the prevention of horrific scenes or more often, "massacres" and "clashes of bewildered masses" actually have the opposite effect and, intentionally or not, turn into a self-fulfilling prophecy. In addition, such instances of reporting tend to cause "moral panics."³⁰ "Moral panics" is a term coined by Stanley Cohen, and signifies a reaction or an attitude of the wider society, founded on the perception of certain groups or sub-cultures, in this case hooligans, as a major threat to the well-being, values and even health of the community.³¹ As the mass media usually represent an amplifier in such circumstances, it could be assumed that significant portions of the Yugoslav sports public, and of the society at large, did succumb to panic thinking.

Simultaneously, Red Star and *Dinamo*, managed by their respective republics' elites, started consolidating and financing their official fan groups and denying any connections to the former communist regime. However, in the late 1980s, majority of the Red Star fans were in favor of the opposition leader – Vuk Drašković.³² This was a signal for the Milošević's establishment to take initiative and so it happened that Željko Ražnatović Arkan, a notorious burglar and assassin who had been on Interpol's most wanted list throughout the 1970s and 1980s, became the leader of the Red Star supporters, and managed to "kick politics out of the stadium."³³

Arkan, who had been a ward of the chief of Yugoslav secret service Stane Dolan throughout his youth, had occasionally been contracted by the state for secret services both in Yugoslavia and abroad. Since he earned most of his reputation, as well as his Interpol Red Notices, in Western Europe, he became known to the domestic public only in 1983, after having returned from his 12 year long journey abroad. Namely, in November 1983, sometime after a bank robbery was committed in Zagreb, after which a rose was left on the counter (allegedly Arkan's trademark in the West) two policemen ambushed him in front of his home in

28 Murphy and Williams and Dunning 1990: 84.

29 Murphy and Williams and Dunning 1990: 85

30 Murphy and Williams and Dunning 1990: 85.

31 Cohen 2002: 27.

32 Hence the song: "Crvena Zvezda, to je srpski tim, Vuk Drašković ponosi se njim (Red Star, it's a Serbian team, Vuk Drašković takes pride in it.)" (Vuk Drašković's name was introduced in place of Slobodan Milošević's when the latter fell out of favor with the Red Star fans)

33 R. V., "Moć desnice: Politika navijanja (The Power of the Right: Politics of Fandom)," *Politika Online*, August 3, 2008, <http://www.politika.rs/rubrike/Tema-nedelje/Moch-desnice/Politika-navijanja.It.html>.

Belgrade. He pulled out his revolver and wounded both of the policemen. He was eventually arrested, only to be released within 48 hours.³⁴

Soon after taking over as the leader of the Red Star fans, Arkan united various groups of Red Star fans, such as Ultras, Zulu Warriors and Red Star Army into a single formation, and changed the traditional nickname of the Red Star fans from traditional *Cigani* (Gypsies) to *Delije* (roughly translated as Strongmen or Heroes).³⁵ *Delije* were officially “inaugurated” on Christmas of 1989.³⁶ The Christmas day is not only symbolic because of its special aura, but also because the dates are different in Orthodox and Catholic Christianity (January 7th and December 25th respectively). Under Arkan’s guidance, the fan crowd transformed from disorderly hooligan groups into a structure similar to a well-ordered battalion.³⁷

Moreover, the focus was shifted from supporting Red Star to supporting “Serbian Star”. Accordingly, Serbian ethnographer of football culture, Darko Mišić, notices that fan graffiti started being written predominantly in Serbian and in Cyrillic script, with the main themes of Red Star, Strongmen, Serbia, and the traditional Serbian symbol with four Cyrillic letters “C” – in rough interpretation - only unity saves the Serbs.³⁸ Moreover, Mišić asserts, flags on the stadiums started being predominantly Serbian, rather than the ones characterizing Red Star, especially during the games against clubs from other republics.³⁹ What is more, “role model” flags were being used extremely rarely, and were abandoned in favor of Serbian flags.

Red Star fans, especially in occasions when they were on away matches outside Serbia, acknowledged their allegiance to Serbia and its president, Slobodan Milošević. Interestingly, such outburst of patriotism hardly made the headlines, since they would not have been compatible with the Arkan’s quest of “kicking politics out of football”. One of the typical Red Star songs from that period can serve to describe the type of “ideology” that Red Star fans were propagating:

*“We are the Warriors from proud Serbia
Come onto the terraces, greet the Serbian race
From Kosovo to Knin, Serbs stand shoulder to shoulder
Serbian Sloba, Serbia is with you
Who says, who lies, that Serbia is small?
It’s not small, it’s not small, it gave us Slobodan!
Manastirka, manastirka, Serbian brandy:
that’s what warms the Serbian army, Slobodan!”⁴⁰*

34 Filip Švarn, “Arkanova ostavština,” *Vreme* (Belgrade, January 14, 2010), http://www.mondo.rs/s158053/Press_izbor/Vreme-_Arkanova_ostavstina.html.

35 Čolović 1995: 60-62.

36 “Delije Slave 20ti Rodendan (Strongmen Celebrate 20th Birthday),” *Sports News, Fudbal Online*, 09 2009, <http://www.fudbalonline.com/vesti/srbija/delije-slave-20-rodjendan.html>.

37 Filip Švarn, “Arkanova ostavština,” *Vreme* (Belgrade, January 14, 2010), http://www.mondo.rs/s158053/Press_izbor/Vreme-_Arkanova_ostavstina.html.

38 Mišić 1990: 152.

39 Mišić 1990: 154.

40 Čolović 2000: 384.

For his exemplary influence over the crowd, Arkan received an abundance of material and logistical support from the club officials and the authorities who were aware that, despite the powerful propaganda, not too many young men would be willing to risk their lives at the prospective frontline. This fact represented an incentive for Milošević to look for people more reliable than the regular JNA privates or, even worse, conscripts, so the potential of harnessing football related violence for military purposes appeared as an ace up the sleeve.⁴¹ Arkan proved that he knew how to cash in on his services: he became the owner of the firm *Delije* which has an exclusive right to manufacture and sell Red Star fan materials, and the sweets shop in the vicinity of the Red Star stadium.⁴²

At the same time, Serbian sports newspapers were full of praise for the activities of Arkan, who was described in one of the articles as "a man close to Star, with an excellent understanding of events in the »Marakana« stadium, who was helping »The Strongmen« to leave politics in the political arena."⁴³ Moreover, he was reportedly seen by the Red Star's management as "its savior when he succeeded, through his personal authority, in reconciling the warring factions."⁴⁴

Concomitantly, Red Star officials started emphasizing the Serbian character of their club, and rebuffed any connections to the previous communist regime. In that vein, the general manager of the club stated in an interview that: "the Star is not a symbol of communism; we have no hammer and sickle in our coat of arms." Such rhetoric served as a message that national allegiance could be communicated through support for the club. Gradually, the stage was being set for the most shocking scene of the Yugoslav football history – the Maksimir incident.

The Maksimir events and how a non-finished match "finished off" Yugoslavia

On May 13, 1990, which was paradoxically the Security day of the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia, a game between *Dinamo* and Red Star was to take place in Zagreb. The game was to be played only a week after the first multiparty parliamentary elections in Croatia, on which the nationalistic Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), led by Tuđman, won a majority of seats. Some years later, Arkan said about this match: "The match took place on the thirteenth, we began to organize immediately after that [...] I could see war coming because of that match in Zagreb, I foresaw everything and I knew that the Ustasha daggers would soon be slaughtering Serbian women and children again."⁴⁵ *Delije*, led by Arkan, started arriving to Zagreb in the early morning, and engaged in numerous clashes with the domestic fans throughout the city and 55 of them were arrested before even

41 Foer 2004: 7.

42 Filip Švarn, "Arkanova ostavština," *Vreme* (Belgrade, January 14, 2010), http://www.mondo.rs/s158053/Press_izbor/Vreme-Arkanova_ostavstina.html.

43 Čolović 2000: 386.

44 Čolović 2000: 387.

45 Čolović 2000: 388.

entering the stadium.⁴⁶ However, another 2,500 – 3,000 Red Star supporters made it in and were placed in a sector in the south.⁴⁷ The Bad Blue Boys, who numbered around 10,000 were located on the northern part of the stadium, so as to avoid any possibility of conflict.

Nevertheless, soon after the game kicked off, along with the usual hooligan repertoire of offenses, threats and curses, a group of *Dinamo* fans from the south tribune started throwing pebbles at the *Delije*. They, in turn, broke down the fence that was separating them from the rest of the spectators, and, uninhibited by the police started tearing plastic seats, throwing them at and charging neighboring spectators. In reaction, *Dinamo* fans from the eastern stands managed to skip the fence, ran through the field, and started tearing down Red Star's banners. At that point, the police intervened, and forced the *Dinamo* fans back into the stands. However, as fire crackers were lit and smoke bombs activated, the Bad Blue Boys finally managed to overcome the barrier and overflowed the field. By that time, all of the Red Star players were already in the dressing rooms, while many *Dinamo* footballers remained on the field. Subsequently, the home crowd and the police engaged in clashes that lasted almost a whole hour, involving batons, mild tear gas, water cannons, knives, stones, bars...

One of the trademark scenes of the late Yugoslav football, and Croat nationalism, was recorded by the cameras – Zvonimir Boban, 22-year-old *Dinamo* captain, attacked a policeman who had previously beaten a Bad Blue Boy, and knocked him down. This act made Boban a national hero in Croatia. The fact that the policeman turned out to be a Muslim, rather than a Serb, did not matter a single bit. After being forced outside the stadium, the fans took to the streets, and there were sporadic fights with the police all over Zagreb until late in the night. According to the official report, 117 policemen and 76 fans were injured during the turmoil that day.⁴⁸ Fortunately, nobody got killed during the havoc.

This event can be seen as the threshold after which the fans of Red Star and *Dinamo* stopped being fans, and became hooligans. As Spaaij and Anderson contend, crowd hooligan activities stem from "issue-relevant" or political, economic, social, and cultural contexts, and this was the case during the havoc that led to match being canceled. In addition to these contexts, traditional fault lines such as religion, ethnicity, differences in living standard, and perceived historical injustices were at the foundations of the violence that occurred. The events at Maksimir stadium perfectly match above-mentioned Collin's description of football hooliganism as "the most sophisticated form of sports violence," since it is "organized in conjunction with a soccer match," but "does not depend upon the events of the game in any way."⁴⁹

46 Slpašak 1997: 127.

47 Bellamy 2003: 118.

48 Majdin, "Slučaj 'Maksimir' – dvadeset godina posle."

49 Collins 2008: 315.

Media reporting on the events surrounding the cancelled football match

Notwithstanding the gravity of the situation, the media reports on the event were, to say the least, exaggerated. Srećko Mihailović, a Serbian scholar, proposes the antagonistic model of media's interpretation of football hooliganism, according to which the divisions between the fans are portrayed as "sharp and deep political and national polarization."⁵⁰ In addition, antagonistic model portrays the reality as black and white, and makes a clear distinction between the good and evil, the guilty and the innocent.

On the one hand, some Croat papers developed various hypotheses e.g. that the incident was a Serb conspiracy to overthrow the elected government in Croatia, together with the police that was blamed for protecting the *Delije* while beating the *Dinamo* fans mercilessly.⁵¹ On the other hand, some Belgrade media attempted to prove that the havoc was planned by Tuđman and "would have happened even if there were no single Red Star supporter on the stadium."⁵² Without getting into the minutiae of searching for the culprits, and the immediate causes of the incident, it is important to emphasize the effect that such media reporting had on the general public. While the Serbian media gave an account of "the twilight of Maksimir nationalistic rampaging" and "the instincts of the wild beasts that wanted blood to be spilled" Zagreb newspapers recounted about "the barbarians that destroyed Maksimir" and "the last attempt to suppress democracy in Croatia."⁵³ Such testimonies were embraced by the authorities in both republics as proofs of their legitimacy and calls for unity within their respective nations in the face of a possible inter-ethnic conflict.

As a case in point, *Politika*, the newspaper of record and the oldest daily in the Balkans, also devoted huge attention to the events in Zagreb. Although considered one of the most professional and respectable newspapers at the time, its coverage of the Zagreb riots were at times almost blatantly biased. The headline on the front page of the May 14, 1990 issue of *Politika* reads "Mass fighting on the stadium in Zagreb" and later on in the text, the event is characterized as "*strava i užas*" which roughly translates to "fright and horror".⁵⁴ While the tone on the front page is rather neutral, expressing utter surprise at the events of the previous night, the article continues on page 19 of the issue. The title of the page is "Heysel at Maksimir", thus equating the events at Maksimir to one of the gravest

50 Slpašak 1997: 115.

51 Slpašak 1997: 141.

52 Slpašak 1997: 137.

53 Slpašak 1997: 117–138.

54 Dobrivoje Janković, "Masovna tuča na stadionu u Zagrebu (Mass fighting at the Zagreb stadium)," *Politika* (Belgrade, May 14, 1990).

football-related tragedies in Europe.⁵⁵ The picture on the top of the page is the one of Boban kicking the police officer, followed by the sentences such as:

"The pitch became a battlefield of the Dinamo fans and the police."

"Three policemen carried their friend out from the pitch, who knows if alive, and even if alive, the poor guy will be wondering how he managed to survive."

"When the 'murderers' – policemen, left the pitch and secured the fences of the empty stances, from the main one, below the central lodge, the shouting started: 'Franjo, Franjo..., Boban, Boban.'"

"Sad atmosphere and the terrible event at Maksimir stadium was followed by the song of Vice Vukov⁵⁶ from his last album, played via the PA system."

Although all these statements might have held some validity, they were at the very least sensationalist, and the aim of the article seemed to present the situation as more dramatic than it really was. Although Red Star fans are mentioned occasionally in the text, they are largely left out of the main discussion.

The next day, the main news in *Politika* was the new Serbian constitution, but the Maksimir events managed to sneak onto the front page as well. This time, the title is non-ambiguous – *"Dinamo fans started the scuffle."*⁵⁷ The first sentences of the article are devoted to refuting the reports of Croatian press in which Red Star fans were accused of having started the incident. The article continues on page 17, where a chronological account of the events is presented. Throughout the text, it is emphasized multiple times that Red Star did not organize the transportation of its fans, and therefore cannot be held responsible for their behavior.⁵⁸ However, the article finds itself at the very bottom of the page, below one which was apparently more important. The title of this article is quite telling – *"Rioting was ordered"*. It asserts that⁵⁹:

"The incident will serve as a reason for HDZ and Tuđman to forcefully implement 'national cleansing' in Croatian organs of order and peace."

"Now it's completely evident that the incident at Maksimir would have happened even if not a single fan of Croena Zvezda came there."

⁵⁵ Dobrivoje Janković, "Masovna tuča na stadionu u Zagrebu (Mass fighting at the Zagreb stadium)," *Politika* (Belgrade, May 14, 1990), 19.

⁵⁶ Croatian singer and politician, famous for his patriotic songs dedicated to Croatia, was branded a Croatian nationalist by the Yugoslav authorities in the early 1970s, and was blacklisted until 1989.

⁵⁷ R. D., "Navijači Dinama započeli kavgu (Dinamo fans started the scuffle)," *Politika* (Belgrade, May 15, 1990), 1.

⁵⁸ R. D., "Navijači Dinama započeli kavgu (Dinamo fans started the scuffle)," *Politika* (Belgrade, May 15, 1990), 16.

⁵⁹ Stevan Zec, "Divljanje je bilo naručeno (Rioting was ordered)," *Politika* (Belgrade, May 15, 1990), 16.

"In the past few years, matches between Dinamo and Red Star and Partizan are not anymore the games between the clubs, but between the Croats and the Serbs."

"Franjo Tuđman was also the first of the practitioners in the multiparty political scene to understand that politics do not happen on meetings, in big and expensive congress halls, in the benches of the parliament and the syndicate homes, but also on the stances where even 100,000 people gather frequently. It will not be a great wonder if the days to come show that, if the Belgrade's 'gypsies' are not blamed for the Maksimir scare, it will be the Serbs in the uniforms of the Croatian police."

This was the first article published in *Politika* which directly connects the rioting on the stadium and the figure of Tuđman, who had been elected for Croatian president only a week prior to the match. In other parts of the text, Tuđman was also accused of paying the BBB to become members of his political party, as well as paying *Dinamo* to advertise the political messages of his party. At the same time, the fans of Red Star were mentioned in the article only once (in the above listed quote).

Therefore, as had been assumed by the Srećko Mihailović, the antagonistic model has been embraced in full by the journalists of *Politika* when presenting the Maksimir riots. In other words, *Politika* portrayed the riots as being a fruit of the complot of the Croatian government led by Tuđman, the BBB as the destructive nationalist element of the modern Croatian society, and willingly embraced by the rest of the Croats, "even elderly people" who had been building the socialist Yugoslavia for the past half century or so.

Such reports were not only prevalent in the days after the match, but also later on. Titles such as "Even sport comes handy to some to destroy Yugoslavia", "Misery of Democracy", "Two betrayals in one day" featured in this newspaper in the following weeks. All of these titles were referring to the Croatian political elite or the Croatian fans. As Cohen argued, moral panic occurs in cases when the scale or gravity of the situation is exaggerated, causing a reaction that is disproportionate to the seriousness of event. As we have seen, *Politika* devoted a substantial portion of their reporting, including the section on the front page of the newspaper, to the hooligan menace.

If it is true that the news in the mass media serve as the chief determinant of the "normative contours of the society"⁶⁰, then it should not be surprising that the public in Serbia was soon overwhelmed with nationalistic zeal. As Cohen rightfully asserts, moral panic requires a suitable enemy, in this case Croatian leadership and nationalistic football fans, a suitable victim, in this case Serbian football fans, and the future of Yugoslavia as the holy creation of the "communist founding fathers" and a consensus that the belief or actions being denounced are not isolated entities but integral parts of the society – "even elderly people offended us."⁶¹

60 Cohen 2002: 8.

61 Cohen 2002: 11.

However, *Politika* was not the only newspaper where reporting of such sort was prevalent. Quite the contrary, "between 1989 and 1991 the Belgrade press printed a large number of commentaries full of dramatic warnings of the danger presented by the spread of chauvinistic passions in sports stadiums, and appeals that something be done to put a stop to such a development."⁶² As a case in point, some of the titles published in the Serbian sports newspapers include: "At the gates of hell", "Distorted support", "Demons of evil", "Love instead of hate", "The abuse of sport", "Falangists among sportsmen", "Supporters turn wild", "National warriors."⁶³

Therefore, the media, and in particular *Politika*, played a highly detrimental role by eliminating any possible options for reconciliation between the two sides. Naturally, as the prospects of a civil war within the country were getting increasingly real, the media in Serbia were quick to emphasize that Croatian political leadership follows "Ustasha like policies".

Call of Duty: The role of Arkan and media in creating heroes out of hooligans

Certain people were ready for this war a while in advance. In an interview given in 1994, Arkan stated that he started with the preparations for the war right after the Zagreb match as he 'sensed' something was about to happen.⁶⁴ Arkan's aim was to create a paramilitary formation which was named the Serbian Volunteer Guard, or Arkan's Tigers, recruited primarily from the ranks of the football thugs. After officially creating the Tigers on October 11, 1990, Arkan also worked on the physical preparation of the Red Star hooligans for the war, as, according to his own account, made them give up alcohol, drugs, get haircuts and shave regularly.⁶⁵

In November 1990, after returning from the meeting with the representatives of the newly established Republic of Serb Krajina in Knin, he was arrested by the Croatian police and charged with "preparing armed rebellion and the overthrow of constitutional order."⁶⁶ He spent seven months in the Croatian jail before being mysteriously released in June 1991, after the negotiations between the Serbian and the Croat authorities.⁶⁷

Arkan's release was an unexpected twist of fate which all but proved that Ražnatović was actually a major figure in the Serbian secret service, and thus one of the Milošević's closest allies. Upon his return, Arkan worked successfully

⁶² Čolović 2000: 374.

⁶³ Čolović 2000: 274.

⁶⁴ Čolović 2000: 60.

⁶⁵ Filip Švarn, "Arkanova ostavština," *Vreme* (Belgrade, January 14, 2010), http://www.mondo.rs/s158053/Press_izbor/Vreme-_Arkanova_ostavstina.html.

⁶⁶ Filip Švarn, "Arkanova ostavština," *Vreme* (Belgrade, January 14, 2010), http://www.mondo.rs/s158053/Press_izbor/Vreme-_Arkanova_ostavstina.html.

⁶⁷ Filip Švarn, "Arkanova ostavština," *Vreme* (Belgrade, January 14, 2010), http://www.mondo.rs/s158053/Press_izbor/Vreme-_Arkanova_ostavstina.html.

on recruiting more people into his paramilitary unit. Namely, he united the two traditionally bitter rivals from Serbia, the *Delije* and the *Grobari*, in their hatred towards the Croats, the Muslims and the Albanians. For instance, as *the Observer* reports, on 22 March 1992, during the derby between Red Star and *Partizan*, after the initial displays of animosity between the two groups, dead silence ensued. Suddenly, about twenty of Arkan's Tigers, in full uniform, took their places on the north stand where the Red Star ultras were usually located, and started brandishing road signs of Vukovar and other Croatian settlements conquered by the Serbian forces.⁶⁸ Arkan also emerged to receive a vast ovation from all the supporters, united in their hatred of the Croats.⁶⁹

If one takes into account the reports that Arkan used Marakana, the Red Star stadium, for training his future combatants, it becomes ever more difficult to believe that the person, who was chosen by the club board to unify different fan tribes, could have performed such a miracle all alone.⁷⁰ What is more, Arkan's arrival to the Marakana stance roughly coincides with Milošević's consolidation of power in May, 1989. Accordingly, one needs to consider the option that the authorities effectively manipulated football fans first into unison by playing the ethic card, and then, when the time has come, those fans volunteered to "defend the homeland" against the "bloodthirsty" *Ustasha*.

As the war began, the Tigers were sent across the Danube, where they joined the JNA in the Vukovar siege.⁷¹ The sports newspapers were full of praise for the patriotism of the young heroes who volunteered to protect the homeland from the chords of *Ustasha* once again threatening to slaughter the Serbs. So, for instance, in March 1992, the official newspaper of Red Star football club published a report from the frontline after having visited Arkan's Tigers. The article's title is "Rifles in their hands, flags in their thoughts" and the topic is "a day with the Strongmen in the Serbian Volunteer Guard."⁷² Towards the end of the article, the author becomes rather sentimental:

"I wind back the film of my memories and distribute these brave boys through all the stadiums of Europe. I know exactly where each of them stood, who first started the song, who first unfurled his flag, who first lit the torch. Arkan's warriors ... They occupy every line of the new issue of 'Star'. The best supporters in the world [...] The 'Strongmen' have left their supporters' props somewhere under the arches of our 'Marakana' stadium and have set off to war with rifles in their hands. Fearless fighters, heroes to a man."

The Tigers had their training camp in Erdut, Eastern Slavonia and they remained actively involved in the operations both in Croatia and later in Bosnia

68 Dave Fowler "Football, blood and war." *The Observer* 18 Jan. 2004.

69 Dave Fowler "Football, blood and war." *The Observer* 18 Jan. 2004.

70 Miodrag Čvorović, "Pravila igre [Rules of the Game]" (B92, 2008), episode 1.

71 Čolović 2000: 61.

72 "Jedan dan sa Delijama u Srpskoj Dobrovoljačkoj Gardi (One day with Strongmen in Serb Voluntary Guard)," *Zvezdina Revija* (March 1992).

until the very last days of the wars. Gradually, the size of the Tigers grew, so that they could boast with more than 10,000 fighters at certain stages of the conflict.⁷³ It is worth mentioning that despite the war surrounding, or perhaps precisely because of it, the *Delije* preserved their fan identity, as one could still hear them sing old fans' songs molded to fit the new environment.⁷⁴

Ivan Čolović, a Serbian anthropologist who analyzed the preparations, departure and involvement of the *Delije* (Tigers) in the war, believes that the apparent perpetuation of football fans' identity during the war can actually shed a new light on the study of the relationship between sports and violence.⁷⁵ He argues that the fans' aggression can represent a valuable "capital of hatred" for a country in the wartime and that in war times the fans can become welcome "cannon fodder."⁷⁶

That said, and having in mind the fact that the transformation of Red Star football hooligans into warriors was backed not only by the Serbian establishment and the club itself, but also implemented by the ruthless criminal, it is hardly a surprise that this process was so effective. Moreover, the aura of invincibility was re-enforced by the unimaginable success of Red Star football club, just weeks before the war broke out. As a former football hooligan put it:

*"They had been one of the most feared hooligan firms in Europe, but under Arkan the Delije became something more sinister, as he drew from the ranks to form the Tigers. Weeks after the victory in Bari [where Red Star won the 1991 European Cup, the highest honor available to a club team in Europe] – where there was "choreography Europe will never forget", as one fan told me – the Tigers, chanting songs they had sung from the North Stand, marched to the front."*⁷⁷

Epilogue

One could nevertheless try to dismiss the connections between the elites, club management, media and the fan leaders, as allegations based on little hard evidence. However, it is widely known that as football became increasingly commercialized in the 1970s and 1980s, it started being a lucrative entrepreneurship.⁷⁸ Consequently, the communist elites realized that by establishing a firmer control over the clubs they could garner significant funds. This type of practice was perfected during Milošević's rule, as Yugoslavia was under UN embargo and the clubs became major exporters, which provided the regimes with a crucial inflow of hard foreign currency. During the 1990s, for instance, Red Star and *Partizan*

73 Foer 2004: 22.

74 Čolović 2000: 61.

75 Čolović 2000: 61.

76 Čolović 2000: 390.

77 Jonathan Wilson, *Behind the Curtain: Travels in Eastern European Football* (Orion Books Limited, 2006).

78 *Fudbal, nogomet i jos ponešto*. Igor Stoimenov and Zoran Panjakovic. B92, 2007. episode 1.

earned revenues in excess of 200 million euro, mostly from selling their best players.⁷⁹ Hence, football clubs were not only the basis for recruitment of young and enthusiastic soldiers, but also one of the main sources of income both for the state and individuals, which explains the fact that during the 1990s many people with dubious backgrounds, including Arkan, owned football clubs.⁸⁰ As a case in point, Arkan took over a second division football club called Obilić in 1996, and already in the next season, the club became the champion of Serbia. However, due to the already mentioned personal reasons, Arkan could not go to the away games across Europe, which might have contributed to the lack of international success of his club. Nevertheless, during the early 1990s, apart from running several successful “entrepreneurships” Arkan managed to become a member of Serbian parliament for a short time, created his own political party, and married the biggest folk diva in the former Yugoslavia, Svetlana Ceca Veličković in what was branded as “the wedding of century” by the Serbian media.⁸¹

In a nutshell, ever since the establishment of the socialist Yugoslavia, sports in general, and football in particular, have been granted a special status. Characteristically, all major football clubs were inextricably linked to certain political structures whose support they enjoyed. As a result, the clubs acquired distinct political outlooks and traditions, which persisted into the late 1980s. Thenceforth, the republics’ elites and their pawns started unabashedly sailing the stormy football waters. In concert with the state controlled media, the boards of the clubs and the fan groups that they themselves helped set up, Milošević and his establishment were able to generate a condition of “moral panic,” which resulted in a nationalistic hysteria and extreme xenophobia, enabling the regime to pursue their bloody endeavors. The havoc created by the Croats worked strongly in favor of such a development. In Croatia, although Tuđman and his establishment were equally, if not more directly, involved in football, and controlled the media to an “enviable” level, the exacerbated relationship with the Bad Blue Boys cost them dearly in terms of public support.

Finally, as for hooligans and their relations to violence, the *Delije* example shows how fans’ aggression can be channeled into a useful state agency, by endowing the fans with a chance to redeem themselves and become heroes of their nation while at the same time providing the state with the much-needed zealous and experienced fighters.⁸²

79 Čvorović, “Pravila igre [Rules of the Game],” episode 1.

80 Čvorović, “Pravila igre [Rules of the Game],” episode 4.

81 Filip Švarn, “Arkanova ostavština,” *Vreme* (Belgrade, January 14, 2010), http://www.mondo.rs/s158053/Press_izbor/Vreme-Arkanova_ostavstina.html.

82 Čolović 2000: 62.

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MARIA VIVOD

HEROES OF THE SERBIAN NATION.

How flamboyant nationalism influenced the rise of socially
marginal individuals

"There is something to the idea that hero-worship is helpful, provided one worship a winner."

(Napoleon Hill)

Introduction

During the 1990s the leaders of several Serbian paramilitary units engaged in the armed conflicts of the former Yugoslavia, were presented to the public as war heroes, the guardians, the defenders of the Serbian people and its territories. Having the benefit of access to the "great Pantheon" of the Serbian media these individuals were current as public figures in the political and in the cultural life during that decade and were the leading social role models to young generations even twenty years after the events. Many of the leaders and members of the numerous paramilitary units sponsored by the Belgrade-government were convicted criminals, mobsters who exchanged their time in prison for some "time at the battlefield" or obtained legal immunity and open hands in looting for their "patriotic deeds" in territories where the armed conflicts raged. Criminals from Belgrade, or some other major city of Serbia, represented as heroes of the Serbian nation appeared as topics or main characters in numerous newspaper-articles, books and urban legends before the armed clashes in former Yugoslavia even started. This article analyzes the two phases of a hero-creation in Serbia, first from the ranks of the criminal underworld and then from the lines of the paramilitary units. Thanks to the media, but also to their self-representation, these individuals were compared and were imagined as living embodiments of ancient heroes, mythical champions – the *hajduks* – the south-Slavic insurgents and bandits during the Ottoman-period, who were a topic of numerous creations in the oral literature. Inspired from ethno-nationalist myths, these individuals reflected, and still do reflect the Serbian nationalist ideology, but also a deeper social need to be in the eternal opposition toward "the establishment" – whether that would be the civic society or the state itself. The heroic image of some of these individuals who were "the prototype" of "the national hero" is partially deconstructed since the warmongering era of the 1990s, nevertheless their role remains for a great part of the contemporary population unquestionable and just, which keeps the Great Serbian ideology alive.

While the socialist regime was slowly decomposing during the 1980s in former Yugoslavia, and the first signs of the flamboyant nationalism started to become palpable, there were several changes in the society of once former Socialist

Republic of Serbia. A rise of marginal individuals became noticeable: folk singers, small-time criminals, alternative healers, fortune tellers and seers came slowly into the spotlight of public attention and became part of the mainstream culture. A special part of that once marginal population gained a significant role in the years to come: convicted criminals, mobsters soon became the idols of a whole new generation. Urban legends were circulating about their (mis)deeds and way of life (& death). As the armed clashes broke out, this “cast” soon was replaced by the warrior-imagery. The fact that several individuals of the organized crime milieu coming from the major Serbian cities joined or lead the so called units of volunteers (paramilitary units) just added to the syncretism of the “criminal-warrior” imagery. New heroes were “born” from the successful melting of the two categories. Leaders of the Serbian paramilitary units¹ – and often the members too – had almost unavoidably a criminal past: as for instance Dragan Vasiljković aka Captain Dragan, Đorđe Božović aka Giška, or Željko Ražnatović aka Arkan. These were the names that were the synonyms (and in some case still are) of “heroes of the Serbian nation”.

Criminals and criminal-warriors

Seeking the roots of the rise of social heroes at the beginning of the 1990s was started with the works of Ivan Čolović² who was among the first to establish a link between the mythical and epical elements of heroism in Serbia with an ascension in the popularity of modern criminals and so called “war heroes” and their image in the media. Čolović’s first works were published as early as in 1993, followed by the work of Ivo Žanić (an article of his was published in 1996)³ exploring the Croatian example. What is in common in their works is that they analyze the revival of mythical heroes and epic poetry in contemporary political rhetoric, media representation of leading -political, military, criminal- figures and images through the perspective of epic heroes taken from the oral popular tradition. They particularly dissect the personages of criminals; concrete examples of individuals who first started their career as common criminals, to be employed later as combatants and to emerge, suitably “bleached”, as war heroes in the media representations. The concept of a traditional outlaw was profusely employed in the analysis of the social acceptance and celebration of such individuals.

The imagery of the heroic resistance of the weak ones was largely exploited already during the Tito regime – by the means of one of the most widespread examples in the form of movies about the heroic deeds of partisans, who although weaker in armaments and numbers, come out as victorious. This leitmotif was successfully perpetuated at the beginning of the 1990s. The politicians and the warlords abundantly exploited this motif in their public speeches. And at times

1 The practice also existed in the Croat and Bosnian paramilitary units too.

2 Čolović 2000a.

3 Žanić 1997.

it was done contradictorily in the portrayal of the mutual history of the ethnic groups fighting the Ottoman Empire, to mobilize nationalist sentiments and in the process of self-legitimization.⁴ The pivotal personage in the war-rhetoric was the personage of the *hajduk*.⁵

The *hajduk*-mythology was widely exploited in the media, assuring the general support of the public. The massive employment of the *hajduk*-imaginary in everyday life, such as in music, in public speeches, and in the press generated the mobilization of military values in the society. Earlier hypothesis about the study of the Balkan clan social organizations and the practice of violence attributed the physical force and the geographical mobility of the “dinaroid”⁶ population resulted in organization of groups of bandits and combatants whose dominant social ideals are to be found in military values, such as heroism, belonging and loyalty to the clan, blood and honor codes, etc.⁷ This theory supported a culture-bounded violence whose roots are in an authoritarian patriarchal society inspired by the mythical figures of hajduks and uskoks. Although the basic “profession” of the *hajduk* and *uskok* was robbery, their main feature is “Robin Hood-esque”, they were stealing from the rich, the Turkish conquerors, which made their actions noble.⁸ They were attacking the enemy, and they were supporting the people and in the same time, supported by the people.

The geo-political situation of the former Yugoslavia, the countless shifts between armed rebellion and the ever changing configurations of political violence during its history promoted the development of the *hajduks* and *uskoks* units and helped their social acceptance giving them even an important role in the cultural life, in a form of epic songs, stories about their deeds. In the most recent conflicts, as before, the inheritors of the *hajduk* and *uskok* movements found their ideal place and were used to explain the high number of paramilitary forces in the conflicts of former Yugoslavia.⁹

Essays whose goals were to explore the growth of “negative social heroes” and the criminal world as dominant social current without the elements of warfare came a bit later.¹⁰ In these studies this social phenomenon is analyzed in a general social context, with the exploitation of the socio-historical “backup” in the form

4 Čolović 2000a, 2000b; Žanić 2007.

5 *Hajduk* [hayduk] is a term most commonly referring to outlaws, highwaymen or freedom fighters in the Balkans, Central- and Eastern Europe

6 Or *dinaric*, a pseudo-scientific classification of a population based on phenotype; *dinaroid* as the mountain of Dinara (Bosnia-Herzegovina)

7 Tomašić 1948; Cvijić 2006a.

8 Vuk Stefanović Karadžić wrote for the *hajduk* that there was less hajduk as the Turkish government was more human, and that their number raised as the conquerors became harsher. He also adds that there were also honest *hajduks*, and that at the beginning there were certainly issued from the nobility. Interestingly he adds that those who are going to join the *hajduks* are not going to do harm, but the isolation from the human society make the individual bad and they start doing harm to others, even to their own people (meaning the Serbs). Source: Vuk Stef. Karadžić, *Srpski rječnik* (1852), II, Sabrana dela Vuka Karadžića, knj. 11, prir. Jovan Kašić, Izdanje o stogodišnjici smrti Vuka Stefanovića Karadžića 1864-1964, Prosveta, Beograd 1987.

9 For instance Bougarel 1999.

10 For instance Nikolić-Ristanović 2004, Pavićević & Simeunović-Patić 2007.

of mythical and epical elements of heroism. Mainly, the roots of such popularity of criminals and the appeal of the crime-scene at the beginning of the 1990s are analyzed as a fruit of economic changes which occurred in that period in Serbia. The general feeling of powerlessness became widespread in the population:

[The] "disappointment of the existing norms and fear in the face of the threatening return to a »chaos«, with an inappropriate degree of development of the person and the society, push the individual and the collective toward the mythical and imagined were seen as one of the main causes of such a great level of attraction toward the underworld."¹¹

The success of such appeal was partially explained as a coping-strategy in social circumstances which had drastically changed:

"Idolization and romanticization of criminals was partly relying on revival of myths of a »potent« protector of the »endangered group« and frustrated individuals. In Serbia of the 90s, the protective function of the state was dramatically weakening. Under the pressure of the security crisis, and in the absence of a »legal state« and rule of law, tribal perceptions of justice were reanimated, and »fighters for justice« and protectors from all »the others« (peoples in the neighborhood, »internal enemies« and oppressors) were imagined. The measure of uncertainty had determined the necessary »fierceness« of fighters. Bloody texts about crimes of »heroes« and »protectors« were suppressed by sublime notes of odes for »saving of the people«. Defense of the people from the endangering »others« is a big »historic« task – and in defense of something so important, all means are allowed."¹²

Social frustrations found their relief in a so called consumption of "forbidden fruits" guaranteed by engaging in criminal activities. These individuals who dared, who had the motivation to venture into the world of crime were rewarded with a "blissful life", meaning to live dangerously and in abundance. The way of living, touching the abysses of a human existence, yet at the same time as having the opportunity to touch "blissfulness" too, which is seen according to him, in fancy cars, beautiful women and golden jewelry. That way of life was represented as the embodiment of collective desires, no matter what its cost. The basic characteristics of "being tuff" and "powerful" of a "professional criminal" was an appealing argument as well, which was not to be underestimated in that general image of an alternative way of life.

One of the causes of such a fantastic rise of social acceptance of criminals and criminal activities was partially due to the economic insecurity of the country which was in a transitional situation between the stages of the decadence of socialism and in early stages of capitalism. In that manner crime as a way of life and particularly as an economic activity was a survival strategy. With the social changes and insecurities which came with the beginning of the decomposition of the federation, charges for such a rapid social transformation partially fell on the already unstable formal normative value system.¹³

11 Pavićević & Simeunović-Patić 2007: 53.

12 Pavićević & Simeunović-Patić 2007: 58.

13 Pavićević & Simeunović-Patić 2007: 53-54.

Deficient social circumstances and a general abandon of established social values were also interpreted as causes of such recognition of social alternatives, oppositions and marginal social realities. The mirror image, more precisely, the dark – the opposite image of social values, and personages embodying those social practices, has become the leading social norm and especially the standard of its elite. The “crossing-over to the other side” of these legal and social norms, engaging in exactly opposite stratagems quickly filled up the gaps in a society which functioned already during the socialist era with great social insufficiencies. As Pavičević & Simeunović-Patić suggested:

“The most dramatic is the moment when anti-heroes, as champions of change and rebellion against deficiencies of the existing system, become fallen heroes raised to the level of a social role-model, i.e., become established heroes. Then they are not a reflection of unsuccessful adaptation any more: they become socially accepted and affirmed, as negativists of the negative. The world of crime and the immoral to which they belong is not so consistently questioned, does not appear as so bad any more, it is even on various levels promoted as the one, or even the only, effective active space, the space which guarantees survival.”¹⁴

According to Pavičević & Simeunović-Patić the “extreme turbulent processes in a society, [were] followed by willing and substantial antisocial activity of certain favorably positioned groups.”¹⁵ One can ask logically which of these groups and antisocial activities came first in Serbia of the 1990s. Were these groups “favorably positioned” because they engaged in antisocial activities, or was it by engaging in such activities against usual practices, and social norms that they became favorably positioned? And once, when the “antisocial practices” became a fashionable mainstream, when these “antiheroes” reached the level of social celebrities in the mid-1990s, did the set of normative values drift from its original enclosure, meaning that an unacceptable value swiftly became a norm? In that sense there is an explanation proposed by Pavičević & Simeunović-Patić, according to which a layer of the Serbian society, “the ordinary man” – as it is called in their article – felt compelled by the massive acceptance to align with the new social and normative changes.

One could argue that the set of social and normative values are constantly renegotiated in a society. When a social norm is more or less tacitly accepted by the social elite, and it is vividly perpetrated by it, as it was in the case of Serbia -it becomes in a manner, a general norm - or it is at least for a great part of the society. This “shift” in the convention of norms in the early 1990s significantly influenced criminals becoming the most common social role models and the production of aspired life styles in which crime played an essential part.

¹⁴ Pavičević & Simeunović-Patić 2007: 53-54.

¹⁵ Pavičević & Simeunović-Patić 2007: 53-54.

As the economic system collapsed and the pillars of civic society crumbled, the normative system of values faced tremendous changes which still can be felt in present day Serbia.

Epic heroes

Indisputably, the social changes in Serbia in the early 1990s resulted in a kind of social collective neurosis which manifested itself in the acceptance and reproduction of seemingly opposite values and individuals as embodiments of those values. In the surfacing of such antisocial values, antisocial individual characteristics were more easily reproduced and socially approved. The traces of social acceptance of such subversive individual character and antisocial behavior gratified by the society were analyzed as having their roots in epical poetry and myth about past national heroes. For instance, Čolović analyzed the reasons of the ambiguity of the character of an (Serbian) epic hero, who is good, yet his personality is saturated with a lot of negative traits. The explanation for a prototype of a Serbian hero who is “good” and “bad” at once is in the binary personality of ancient south Slavic gods. The gods, were often endowed with a “mythical cruelty” – such as for instance *Dabog* the supreme god which metamorphosized into mortal fighters as Christianity spread¹⁶ and were extremely equivocal, ready to punish for the smallest mistake, while his “good parts” remained relatively limited. Other authors see the reasons in the idea that:

“[...] the experience of centuries-long oppression of the peoples in the Balkans region has disrupted the flexible (concerning »moral purity«) ethical profile of an epical hero. The national epical hero has won redemption for certain shady deeds in the context of his righteous and continuous struggle against slavery, crime and the vile ruler.”¹⁷

The revival and the restoration of the past conflicts, tensions and animosities between the ethnic groups which occurred in the history of the Balkans was blamed as one of the principal causes of the war in the territories of former Yugoslavia¹⁸ and was certainly abundantly used in the ideological nationalist narratives. The examples taken from the past antagonisms in the form of the major historic events - such as the battle of Kosovo (Amselfeld) – were bluntly exploited in the war machinery personified in various political parties and the media in order to “heat up” the spirits. This rhetoric of war-language inspired from the past events was mostly used in Serbia,¹⁹ although it was also spread in Bosnia and Croatia to justify the state, and para-state violence.²⁰ The political *à-prioris* about the eternal animosities between

¹⁶ Čolović 2006a, Radenković 1996.

¹⁷ Pavićević & Simeunović-Patić 2007: 54.

¹⁸ See in Ramet 2005: 54-107.

¹⁹ Čolović 2000.

²⁰ Žanić 2007, Denich 1994.

the ethnic groups were the main topics used in political speeches and newspapers.²¹ The language used in such occasions, such as political rallies, through the press, and in front of the units was militant,²² archetypal, and inspired by the rhythm of the epic poetry (the traditional decasyllabic rhyme).²³ The past was revived once again and a continual link was created between the past and the present where only the nation presented a lasting paradigm.

"As a result of this mythical perception of time, not only have the soldiers from earlier world wars – the Ustasha and Chetnicks – reappeared or been resurrected in public discussions, but also glorious ancestors and heroes of all epochs, including mythical or legendary figures from the history of the Balkans. Our political and military leaders are surrounded and protected by an entire retinue of the most important names from national history and folklore."²⁴

This collective imagery was organized around the metaphors, style and symbolic meanings having their roots and their origins in epic poetry and in an imagined collective history. The pivotal personage of this imaginary exploited in this manner was the mythical hero – the warrior.

*"The Serbian warriors live and act in harmony with nature as well. They are distinguished by their exemplary physical and moral health, for they have preserved and strengthened in themselves the natural impulse to hate the enemy and to destroy him. The ideal of the natural person finds its highest realization, however, in the fusion of peasant and military virtue in the shape of the peasant-warrior. According to this ideology, life in peace as well as life outside the village deforms natural human vitality. Therefore, a life full of danger under the constant threat of attack by the enemy is much healthier: a life full of contradictions, the life of a warrior. Based on her competence as a biologist, Biljana Plavšić²⁵ comes to the conclusion that »...the Serbians in Bosnia, and in the border regions in particular, have maintained and sharpened the ability to recognize danger for the nation early on and to develop the mechanisms for its defense. In my family it was said that the Serbians in Bosnia are much better than those in Serbia... I am a biologist, and therefore I know that those species which live next to others and are constantly threatened by others have the best possibility to adapt«."*²⁶

²¹ Čolović 2000b.

²² On a video made by the members of a paramilitary unit the "Scorpions" (the scene is later incorporated in a documentary of "Scorpions-the home movie" (*Škorpioni-spomenar*) an orthodox priest is giving his blessing to the troop while reciting an improvised riming (sic) speech in a form of verses: "Brothers the Turks became vampires, wanting the Serb sanctities. Accord to your faithful army the conquest of the enemy nation." (*Braćo, Turci se povampirše. Hoće srpske svetinje. Daj vernoj vojsci tvojoj da bude na savlađivanje neprijateljskog naroda.*)

²³ Čolović 2000a: 313.

²⁴ Čolović 2000c.

²⁵ Biljana Plavšić is a former Bosnian Serb politician and university professor that recently served two-thirds of a sentence in Sweden as a result of a conviction by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) for war crimes.

²⁶ Čolović 2000c.

The prototype of the combatant is therefore brave hearted, generous and righteous, nevertheless with an ambiguous nature; he is sometimes cruel, irrational and impulsive and he is always a minority in a resistance²⁷ and obstinately different from others. One of the main prototypes of the combat-ideal taken from the mythic past, inspired from the Serbian mythology and epic songs, used abundantly in individual narratives, public speaking and in the media was the Miloš Obilić.

According to a legend, Miloš Obilić,²⁸ the mythical hero of numerous epic songs and tales was breastfed by his mother until his male hood.²⁹ The efforts of his mother resulted in Obilić's extraordinary strength, courage and audacity and were the basis of his name: for the Serbian word *obilan* means "abundant"; "A national hero, abundant in strength and heroism."

As the motif of the Serbian epic heroes greatly inspired the political rhetorics in the public as well as the private scene, Obilić's name was invoked often as an example which was to be followed by the soldiers who prepared to battle for the Serbian territories. The prototype of a Serbian hero seen in Obilić was evoked to encourage and to give an example to many units of "volunteers" especially if they were under the leadership of a charismatic leader who understood the mechanism which was triggered by claiming those names charged with a heavy historical, epic and even a religious meaning. The mechanism consisted of summing up images, notions inspired by legendary events of a much more glorious past lived by their ancestors, to motivate their successors in the modern uncertain times to re-earn that glory of those mythical ancestors.

Several paramilitary units, made from so called "volunteers" – partially from convicted criminals who exchanged their time in prison for a time "at the battlefield" or were granted "free hands" for legal immunity – had the benefit to an access of the "great Pantheon" of the Serbian media during the 1990s, as they were presented in Serbia as the stars, the war heroes, the guardians, the defenders of the Serbian people and its territories.³⁰ It was thanks to the Serbian media that the image of the numerous paramilitary units was perpetuated as the protectors and saviors of the Serbian nation.³¹ At the beginning of the 1990s they were omnipresent in the printed press, television, and in all segments of public life. Apart from being active in political activities of the parties which supported them, they embraced a more "mundane" approach to the public life.

Little indeed was known at that time in Serbia how many paramilitary units existed and were employed in conflicts in Croatia and later Bosnia. The United

27 Jansen 2000.

28 Miloš Obilić (died 1389 during the battle of Kosovo) was a legendary medieval knight in the service of Prince Lazar, ruler of Serbia.

29 The bibliography about Obilić is to be found in most part in oral literature (in collections of epic poetry of Vuk Stefanović Karadžić (1787-1864) a Serbian linguist and a language reformer). Obilić is also a central personage in written poetry, as for instance in works (published: 1847-1862) of Branko Radičević (1824-1853).

30 Čolović 2000a.

31 Vivod 2011.

Nations Security Council³² reported in 1994, that in the conflicts in the territories of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), the Republic of Croatia, and to a lesser extent, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, eighty-two “paramilitary organizations”³³ were employed. Fifty-five paramilitary groups were operational in support of the Government of Serbia,³⁴ thirteen of Croatia, and fourteen were Bosnian Muslim paramilitary units. Under the definition of the UN Security Council the paramilitary organizations are loosely organized and act in an ad hoc basis, they were organized by the governments, or by political parties, by the local police, community or political leaders. And it mentions an interesting detail: “According to some reports, the paramilitary organizations also include criminals released from prison solely for the purpose of forming these units.”³⁵

One of the most well-known warlords of that time, who also came from the ranks of convicted criminals (while exchanging his service for legal immunity), was Željko Ražnatović Arkan. Arkan was especially susceptible to use Obilić’s image. He even bought a soccer club (1995-1996) with the name of this Serbian medieval knight to make a full circle in his “sport career”.³⁶ Because he would not being able to represent the Obilić soccer team while abroad, he passed on the ownership to his wife Ceca, who was sentenced for money laundering from the transfer of the players to foreign clubs (2011).

In one of the earliest video footages about Arkan’s unit the “Tigers”, he is filmed in front of his unit while making a speech to the soldiers.

*“All as one! That’s a Serbian army! [...] The whole Serbian people are watching you. You are their heroes and the Serbian Obilićs. And it can’t happen that one Serbian Obilić walks away like a c.... [female genital, pejorative] and sit down near the school and don’t care about the [battle] position! Is that clear? It’s impossible to lose the moral – I am tired, four months...; What is four months? What if this war lasts for fourteen years? What will we do then? To surrender? We won’t surrender! This is a Serbian land, a holy Serbian land! Are your graves here? Here are your churches! You have to defend what is yours!”*³⁷

From Arkan’s motivational speech beside the “*Blut und Boden*” – leitmotiv of a fascistic ideology the personage of Obilić is used as a concept, more than a symbol.

32 28 December 1994 “Final report of the United Nations Commission of Experts established pursuant to Security Council resolution 780 (1992)” (S/1994/674/Add.2 (Vol. I Annex III.A))

33 28 December 1994 “Final report of the United Nations Commission of Experts established pursuant to Security Council resolution 780 (1992)” (S/1994/674/Add.2 (Vol. I Annex III.A))

34 Expression used in the upper mentioned report of UN

35 28 December 1994 “Final report of the United Nations Commission of Experts established pursuant to Security Council resolution 780 (1992)” (S/1994/674/Add.2 (Vol. I Annex III.A))

36 Arkan entered at a political scene as a leader of soccer fan-club *Crvena Zvezda*. The core of his paramilitary unit came exactly from this fan-club, making from the most ardent hooligans the ultimate paramilitary soldiers.

37 The video footage was used in Filip Švarm’s documentary “The Unit, the untold story of the Red Berets” (2006)

It is an idea for itself in this symbolical expression embracing a whole array of values. How deeply enrooted this concept was in the mindset of the paramilitary unit members is shown in the following example, taken from a completely different circumstance: a trial for war crimes.

During the trial (2005-2007) for the Trnovo massacre³⁸ the leader of the Scorpions, another notorious Serbian paramilitary unit, Slobodan Medić aka Boca, was confronting his former subordinates and fellow unit members who agreed to speak about the events, to “tell on him”:

“I was never a member, I was always Obilić, and you were too, no one from you was a Branković.”³⁹ The situation is as it is. We are going to eat sh... with the same spoon.”⁴⁰

In this line he later continued while speaking to Pera Petrašević, another defendant, also a former Scorpion member, who was also a witness against him:

“If you are so loyal to me, how come you didn’t stay honorable and honest to the end? Because the real Serbian commander.... Listen to me well now. If you had killed even a thousand persons, you don’t have any right to point your finger at your commander. Even if he told you to do that, you don’t have the right to point your finger. The true Serbian Obilić doesn’t have the right to point his finger at his commander. Do you know that?”⁴¹

The mythical Obilić is taken seriously by these warrior-amateurs to a point to be used as a “small change” in the exchanges between them during the process of the self-justification. One can easily imagine how abundantly the image of this medieval knight was employed while the group was still coherent. The Obilić-image as a determining factor was employed as a model standard in conduct as the (Serbian) ideal to be reached – the quintessence of all possibly attributed meanings linked to war, army, courage, nobility, masculinity, etc.

In the process of self-representation, the personage of Obilić was produced as a powerful image; a direct ancestor of an individual identity, constructed from the imaginary relation with him based on bloodline and on a concept of a social role: an ancestor-by-weapon whose protection can benefit only the “true” Serbian warrior.

38 The Trnovo massacre (July 1995) happened as a part of a killing on a greater scale - the Srebrenica genocide. Six members of the Scorpions were put on trial for executing: Azmir Alispahić (17) Safet Fejzić (17) Juso Delić (16) Dino Salihović (20) Smail Ibrahimović (35) Sidik Salkić (36). The killing was filmed by one of the unit members and later served as incriminating evidence in a trial for war crimes. Vivod 2011.

39 In epic songs, Obilić suffered martyrdom due to a treachery of his friend Vuk Branković. The name Branković became a metaphor for treachery in a common language.

40 An expression which means that the same problems will be faced in the same manner by all the participants. Scorpions 2007: 321.

41 Edition of the Humanitarian Law Center from Belgrade: *Škorpioni-od zločina do pravde* [Scorpions – from crime to justice] Beograd: Edicija Dokumenta. Fond za humanitarno pravo, dokumentovanje i pamćenje, 2007. [trial transcripts from the Scorpion- trial] Scorpions 2007: 322.

The image inspired respect and loyalty on an almost religious level. In his defense Pera Petrašević responded to Slobodan Medić by arguing the blasphemous character of such a metaphor:

*"It's evident that I am not a Serbian Obilić and I wouldn't compare myself to him. I wouldn't measure what I have lived with Obilić, the glorious Obilić."*⁴²

The worship of such a glorious ancestor is based on the sacrifice that such an ancestor committed for the collective "us". The sacrifice is even greater if it has resulted in death. The "stroke of death", taken on him demands gratefulness from the behalf of the worthy successors because he accepts death in order for us live.⁴³ In this line of thinking a deeper relation is established with the glorious ancestor(s) then the one based on blood: the worthy inheritors become the reincarnation of the epic hero. The Obilić's of the 20th century. The link between the new warriors and the epic heroes is eternal in the time and space continuum. At the specific crossroad of timelessness which is the battlefield, the ancestors step in to help the descendants. "Acclamation of ancestors" (*klicanje predaka*) is a war-custom described by Čajkanović⁴⁴ which supports an element in the idea of the perception of the war as a duty to not only living but the dead as well. Čajkanović reports the verses of Njegoš⁴⁵ about the Serbian custom to evoke the names of epic heroes – concretely the name of Obilić, of the Jugović brothers, etc. – during a battle.⁴⁶ The invocation of such hero-protectors is a symbolical summoning of their special powers and also an awakening of the interest of the dead to participate too in the battle.⁴⁷

The syncretism created between the concepts of epic heroes, such as Obilić, and between the imaginary depictions of *hajduks*, is enhanced with a special kind of demeanor – a condition *sine qua non* of an identity attributed to these imaginary roles-models. Such a model of behavior as the idea of the *hajduk*-unsubmissiveness (*hajdučki nepokor serb.*) a particular conduct and a life-philosophy made of insubordination and disobedience; of heroes on the margins of the society. Well described in the example of Mediterranean societies,⁴⁸ the idea is based on the mistrust toward the government and the state authority which results in social banditry. Such conduct is a directed defiance to act against all circumstances and obstacles; in spite of it (*iz inata*), for the pure purpose of acting in a contradictory manner, even at one's peril.

The representation of lawbreaking and acting against all social conventions has its sources in the idea of a protecting "true values" which are in discordance with

42 Scorpions 2007: 322.

43 Čolović 2000a: 19.

44 Čajkanović 1973.

45 A Montenegrin Prince-Bishop and poet. 19th century.

46 Čajkanović 1973: 115.

47 Čajkanović 1973: 116.

48 Hobsbawm 1971.

the establishment. These values in opposition with the usual social values, conventions and the law are nevertheless genuine and are felt deeply, because they are experience-based and intimate, lived in one's own skin.⁴⁹ The symbolical keepers of such social sentiments were the *hajduks*, the traditional combatants against a system in its every form. As the "system", embodied in state institutions, became more and more predatory, it was a "natural order" to seek out the remnants of the traditional mavericks and "freedom fighters" in their modern version. They were the incarnation of a collective desire for protectors of social values.

After the accomplishment of militarization of criminals, their heroization followed. The extermination of national enemies is endowed with elements of sacredness, because a war can only be defensive in its narrow, hypocritically motivated interpretation. Therefore to achieve victory all possible means are necessary and justified – for the resistance toward the "Other" is legitimate. According to the principle of the defense of inherited values from ancestors⁵⁰ the war is also an occasion of identification with them. Based on love and loyalty toward the ancestors, the leader of a unit becomes an incarnation of a mythical hero – the founder of a whole ancestry – the "eponymic hero".⁵¹ The "brotherhood" between the members of a unit based on ethnicity is founded on such a religious concept and perception of an ancestry.⁵² The leaders of a unit were venerated because they executed a profound role, more close to the sacral without any politics or similar "earthly interests" – the protection of an ancestry, the protection of a nation. A decade after the war, many of them are still endowed with a "nimbus" of fighters for a greater cause than politics (see *infra*). Their criminal past is not an obstacle in the process of their heroization, it even assisted it – this past was not hidden, and no effort was made to cover it up. The new identity of a criminal-warrior-hero was intentionally constructed on a past (criminal) character, without any "filtration" or bleaching.⁵³ It was created with the use of an identity-patchwork made of a past uniqueness, the nickname among others, so that the previous reputation accompanied his owner in a new stage of his vocation: the war.

The influences of the ancestors of the past glorious heroes such as Obilić and others *hajduks* in the criminal-warrior inheritors became apparent in the course of the armed conflicts. Although indisputably social misfits, their sole "value" was seen in their qualitative patriotic upbringing for which they incarnated, according to the "*Blut und Boden*" ideology, the famous ancestors, whose blood flowed in their veins. Arkan for instance stated that he didn't have previous military experience: he didn't need any- he was a soldier by his blood. The importance of the "pure bloodline" is also accentuated in the text of the oath of the Serbian Volunteer Guard (SDG) – the word "blood" is mentioned a couple times.⁵⁴

49 Herzfeld 2005.

50 Čolović 2000a: 99.

51 de Coulanges 1900: 158.

52 de Coulanges 1900: 158.

53 Čolović 2000a: 189.

54 Čolović 2000a: 197.

The process of the heroization⁵⁵ of criminal-warriors into blissful heroes-protectors of a nation was in its essence based not on the bleaching of their previous past, or on the irresistible law of compulsion to accept the least painful solution to a problem. This process of the heroization, abundantly supported by the media of those times, was based on one of the fundamental characteristics of such individuals: their distinctive and obvious violence.⁵⁶ The additional meaning, in a semiotic sense of the “hero” concept – as a “surplus” of the Serbian hero-prototype – was abundantly emphasized in the folklore and political rhetorics inspired from it, in which the violent temper is an admirable mark of an individual’s character.

This ambiguous character of criminals – brutal yet generous – inspired from the imaginary *hajduk*-model, which presents in itself a perfect dichotomy of good and bad, was applied to the major Serbian mobsters at the beginning of the 1990s and was transmitted to the paramilitary unit members which resulted in a wide social acceptance of a predatory behavior demonstrated by them, which was a unavoidable part of this concept. The imagined precondition (better said an illusion) that these paramilitary units did harm “only to the enemy” – made up partially by criminals-warriors – and not to compatriots or to the individuals from the same ethnic group, guaranteed a wide social acceptance, and endorsed their popularity, while maintaining that crime is not always unmoral and punishable. The fact that many of these unit members – a part of their well known and media loved leaders - were individuals with a previous criminal record just evoked the collective imagination of the righteous outlaw fighting for the good cause. Everything was – and remains for a part of the Serbian population – pardoned if it was made in the name of patriotism. The measure of the patriotic merits acted as an “amnesty” for all which was committed previously or in the process of making it and assured a social advancement⁵⁷. Represented as the masculine ideals for their authority – brutal as the personages from the epic poetry – for their appearance – men “handy” with guns – the social status they earned rapidly and the group cohesion they demonstrated – made them a role model for several generations which were yet to come.

⁵⁵ Girardet 1986.

⁵⁶ Čolović 2000a: 204.

⁵⁷ For instance, Arkan also had “excursions” in the Serbian parliament in 1992 and again in 1993 by winning the elections with his party.

Conclusion

Since the fall of the Milosevic regime there was almost no open public debate in any form about their role in war crimes and genocide committed and the support of these troops by the Serbian government. Small efforts have been made on the public level to reveal the past of these units⁵⁸. The chat rooms, the virtual communities and blogs on the internet have become the new battlefields between the supporters, the fans of these “heroes of the nation” and those who are convinced – and their victims themselves – that the troops were the main carrier, the tool of the ethnic cleansing, the genocide in the former territories of the late Yugoslavia. For the first group these veterans remain popular, untouchable and their reputation uncontested: the mission of these units was the protection of “Serbianhood” (*srpstvo*) and for the sake of this mission the members of these units were and remain venerated. The crimes these individuals and units committed are contested and reinterpreted to be acts for the sake of “greater causes”. How wide-spread the popularity/notoriety of these units is can be demonstrated in the number of their (virtual) fans. For instance, the official webpage of the Red Berets - the JSO (*Crvene Beretke*), the unit whose members participated in the Đinđić assassination and which was disbanded afterword (2003), counts 213,683 visits⁵⁹. This webpage also advertises and sells the books of Milorad Luković Ulemek aka Legija. There are at least three “official” JSO-profiles on Facebook and about fifty (sic!) other profiles under the term *crvene beretke* (red berets) promoting either the former leader of this unit, Legija, or the unit itself. The number of groups or profiles dedicated to the name of Željko Ražnatović aka Arkan or his “Tigers” is even bigger.

For the victims and those individuals willing to consider the criminal-warriors from a different perspective, these units are the source of all evil that happened during the armed conflicts of the breakup of the country. Recently, negative events which shocked the Serbian public are explained, interpreted – especially by the independent media – in the perspective of this very dubious past, as an unwanted “heritage” left by these units, once declared as “heroes of the Serbian nation”. The origins of the contemporary events are investigated through the looking glass of the ideology of the past which instigated the formation of such units, the motifs of the paramilitaries to act as they did, and consecutively the admiration of the Serbian public mirrored in media cover they enjoyed. After a decade of the overthrow of the Milosevic regime, these units and their former members are the embodiment of the link between the past and the present.

There are several arguments usually brought up in the “virtual” quarrels’ going on at the various “Yugospheric” internet forums and diverse sharing-websites (as for instance YouTube) or in private debates raging between the supporters and

⁵⁸ There are several exceptions: the Humanitarian Law Center from Belgrade (*Fond za Humanitarno Pravo Beograd*) is one of the few NGOs which organized open debates confronting victims and perpetrators

⁵⁹ December 2010.

the opponents of criminal-warriors. The complete denial of the past events is one frequent attitude which usually stops all debates by rejecting every argument, data on a topic (one such topic is the genocide in Srebrenica, Bosnia). The range of the negations is extended on the relativization of the past events, in which the argumentation uses a comparison with past, historical happenings from another time-frame (usually the WWII) and with actors from other ethnic groups (such as for instance: Germans, Croats, etc.). These past events, the "sins" committed by other ethnic groups in the past justifies what was done "in the name of the Serbian people". Such relativization is usually supported by a bidding of casualties and victims numbers on both sides: enemy/ours: for instance the Bratunac victims are invoked versus the Srebrenica victims, etc. This kind of argumentation is always sustained by the witty and convenient circumstantial factors according to which the massacres and killings were committed by a group of "sick", "unstable" criminals – who were already "bad" before going on the battlefield... – or individuals, psychologically deranged by the loss of their previously massacred relatives. The temporality of that individual loss is systematically highlighted - the anteriority of an individual loss is always crucial. And there is also the argumentation according to which the denial of the past killings and crimes is not even tempted. In those narratives and argumentation violence, criminal acts and brutality committed by these criminals-warriors and paramilitary units is completely accepted and even promoted. All acts are unquestionably justified and excluded of doubt by the sole intent and motivation of these groups and individuals: the motivation to protect and save the greater good, the collective good: the ethnic group. The "sanctity" of the ethnic group is put above all social conventions or moral, ethical dilemmas.

They are several hypotheses on the topic why the individuals from social margins of a society gain such a public attention and became the cultural mainstream in Serbia during the 1990s: the transitional phase which followed the decomposition of the socialist era, the economic uncertainty, the breakdown and dysfunction of civic institutions was blamed for the rise of the heroes coming from the criminal underworld. The outbreak of armed conflicts and the flamboyant Serbian nationalism dug out on the surface a new category of "heroes" embodied in criminals-metamorphosed into warriors, possessing all the martial, manly qualities necessary for the re-wakening of the popular imagery and phantasms about the mythical heroes of a collective past. Ideal for the war-propaganda, represented as those who are "willing to die" for the good of the nation they were imaginary convincing and were ideal for the establishment of a blueprint for social identification and the support of a national identity. However, indisputably these "heroes of the Serbia nation" remain however the main transmitters and ideological tools of the Greater Serbian ideology and flamboyant nationalism which moved from the conflictual territories into the cyber-space and other, real spaces of a society which struggles to become civic.

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HEROES OF THE FAITH IN THE HUNGARIAN UNDERGROUND CHURCH

It is quite with mixed feelings that I discuss in a scientific paper Rev. P. György Bulányi, one of the most discussed leader figures of the so-called underground church in Hungary. Diffuse in the sense that his teaching and his person were in the years of my youth personally very important for me. As I started to work on this particular topic, I thought that it would not be so difficult to do this. But after reading and studying some important scholarly literature on the very broad and complicated topic, namely, heroes, elaborated in different times through different theoretical approaches – I was promptly certain that the task is anything but easy. In my paper first I try to present a short life story of Rev. Bulányi. In the second step before I can focus on the special question of Bulányi's hero existence, I refer to two dimensions of my theoretical frameworks: one about the different sub-periods of the last six decades of Hungary, and another about the turn between two important theoretical approaches in ethnology and in the scientific study of religion as well, specifically, from the phenomenological to the discourse theoretical one. In the third step I examine the figure of Rev. Bulányi in relation to some classical definition of the hero. On the basis of these my conclusion is that Rev. Bulányi and other characteristic representatives of the underground church should be interpreted as heroes of the faith only with very strong limitations.¹

Christian Churches in the Underground

In the approximately 40-year-long period of persecution of Christian churches and other religious organizations after World War II in Central and Eastern Europe, thousands of church members – priests, members of various congregations and laypeople as well – played a crucial role in passing on and renewing Christian beliefs and the praxis of Roman Catholicism. Some of these people suffered severe punishment and in some cases, interdicts too. Considering this, one may designate these people as heroes of the faith. In my paper I attempt to differentiate between two periods of communist persecution by using two Biblical metaphors: those of the Egyptian and Babylonian captivity.² The heroes of the faith have different functions in these two different periods. In the former they symbolized the possibility of general survival. In the latter period they symbolized characteristics

1 The research was supported by the TÁMOP-4.2.4.A/2-11/1-2012-0001 Nemzeti Kiválóság Program.

2 Luther also used the metaphor "Babylonian captivity", but in a different sense. Luther 1947.

of special spiritual and ecclesiastical ways of living in persecution.³ After the collapse of communism (a Post-Babylonian time) in the contemporary period of “existing democracy” and religious pluralism, there are no more heroes of the faith on the political side of the societies of Central and Eastern Europe. The heroes of the faith can be found more in places of solidarity and of spirituality. The various functions of heroes of the faith will be discussed through the biography of P. György Bulányi SP, founder and leader of one of the best known “movimento” grass roots movements in Hungary.

Bulányi’s person and work⁴

György Bulányi was requested to organize small communities by an emissary of the Holy See in 1945 in the hope that the Church will survive the suppression of the communist regime by living in small groups. For this pastoral activity Bulányi was arrested and with the charge of leading an anti-state organization he was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1952. He was set free in 1960 but was not allowed to be employed by the Church, thus he worked as a transportation worker.

During the sixties he completed his six-volume theological work (“Seek the Kingdom of God!”), in which he analyzed the words of Jesus in the Gospels. He concluded that Jesus wanted human society (built upon domination and violence) to be changed here on earth into a world based on love, following the ideals of non-violence, serving others, and giving. Bulányi was convinced that all people are capable of following the teachings and life of Jesus; moreover, this is the only possible path for humanity.

Following the model of the community of Jesus’s disciples, Bulányi restarted the organization of [small] communities (later known as Bokor – “bush”) [...]. After 1979, an increasing number of young community members refused to obey the military conscription order and underwent several years of imprisonment for their decision. Therefore, the communist regime exerted pressure on the Hungarian Catholic bishops to enact coercive measures against Bulányi. (The state could not take direct actions against him due to the Helsinki Accords.) A Church body lead by Cardinal László Lécai suspended him from public priestly functions [...]. His punishment was not withdrawn with the political change of 1989, and the restrictive measures were officially cancelled as late as 1997.

Bulányi emphasized several times that “the alliance of Throne and Altar” is in opposition to the will of God. He often requested the Church to face sincerely its own past. Until the end of his life, he was working for a Church that re-embraces

3 The churches and oppositional actions in tree formerly communist countries – Hungary, Poland and Romania – were elaborated on in a very interesting comparative study by Daniela Angi. Although, she did not analyze the Christian underground movements either in Hungary or in Romania. Angi 2011.

4 I have taken the short CV from the official website of the Bokor Movement (www.bokorportal.hu), which I am presenting with minor corrections for greater neutrality. In this paper I can and should only concentrate on the symbolic dimensions of Bulányi’s life story.

the very roots of the teachings of Jesus and wants to turn the Earth into the Kingdom of God not by words of power but by the network of brotherly communities.

After elaborating on his work in detail in my earlier book written in German,⁵ now it is a quasi-playful task for me to examine and to present his symbolic features. It is certain enough that there is a mutual interaction between the real life story of a particular person, in our case Rev. Bulányi, and the creation of a societal symbol. From a hermeneutical point of view it is not the various details that are particularly important but the interpretation and the reflection on concrete societal groups behind the hermeneutical processes.

Symbol of opposition

From the short life story it may be clear that one of the most important characteristics of Bulányi's story is the status of opposition: against the communist dictatorship, against the "friendly coexistence of church and state", and against the course of Roman Catholic hierarchy because his collaboration with communist church persecutors.⁶

Symbol of the underground church

Bulányi's main activities were building and leading small Christian communities, according to his own notions: the formation of the kingdom of God. He was very active and effective in their management, initiating the formation of several dozen groups and organizing a broad collaborative network of the groups, with roughly 5000 members in total.

Constructing heroes

The main question can be formulated as follows: which special population makes a social unit – e.g. a person, an event, a place, a historical fact etc. – into a heroic or much broader, should I say, extraordinary unit. According to one phenomenological approach, heroes have special characteristics and impact on different populations. But at the same time, one has to recognize the relevance of each hero as well. I prefer to focus on the approach of critical hermeneutic and discourse theory, which offer to us very useful tools for understanding the mutual interaction between special values of particular heroes, on the one hand, and on the other hand, the special cultural and political interest of the particular society by naming an average person as a hero.

⁵ Máté-Tóth 1996.

⁶ See the historical analysis about Roman Catholic hierarchy during the Kádár regime in Hungary. Ungváry 2007.

Bulányi a hero? A definition attempt

After briefly referring to the life story of Rev. Bulányi and some preliminary theoretical conditions or requirements regarding the correct interpretation of his symbolic figure as a hero, we may now turn to certain definitions of a hero and to examine if Bulányi can be interpreted as a hero of the faith. "Heroes of the faith" - the title of this paper can shed light on a profound misunderstanding. Under heroes of the faith hagiographic literature lists, first, saints of the biblical and post-biblical centuries. Some of them are martyrs, e.g. people who offer their lives for their own faith – or, with other, often used words – they paid with their blood for eternal life. Nevertheless, in a specific sense "heroes of faith" can be used for better understanding of the role of Christian activists in the period of church persecution. In making this test of interpretation we should keep in mind the very different definitions of the hero and the very different theoretical approaches to being a hero.⁷

The way of a hero

One of the classical new definitions of a hero's main characteristics was elaborated by Campbell based on important works from the field of cultural anthropology, myth-theory and religious studies as well.⁸ Campbell's model focuses on the "way or journey of a hero" and has a tripartite structure. The hero starts out in the ordinary world and receives a call to enter an unusual world of strange powers and events (*a call to adventure*). If the hero accepts the call to enter this strange world, the hero must face tasks and trials (*a road of trials*), and may have to face these trials alone, or may have assistance. At the most intense point, the hero must survive a severe challenge, often with help earned along the journey. If the hero survives, the hero may achieve a *great gift* (the goal or "boon"), which often results in the discovery of important self-knowledge. The hero must then decide whether to return with this boon (*the return to the ordinary world*), often facing challenges on the return journey. If the hero is successful in returning, the boon or gift may be used to improve the world (*the application of the boon*).⁹

In case of Rev. Bulányi, the first stage, named by Campbell as "a call to adventure", can be seen in the meeting between him and a Slovak Jesuit P. Kolakovič in 1945 in Debrecen. According to Bulányi's memoir, P. Kolakovič had a very clear

⁷ On the differentiation between heroes and martyrs see Richardson 2008.

⁸ Joseph Campbell's (1949) *Hero with a thousand faces* was much influenced by van Gennep's basic outline of the three-fold structure of liminal processes; *preliminary, liminaire, and post-liminaire*. He took the concept and applied it to the transitional phases between the beginning and the end of a journey or transformational process. Liminality is the process of going in between two states and the time spent in that transitional zone when one is neither one nor the other but in the process of becoming. Liminality is the journey of transformation. Leeming 1998. Campbell's model is used in Hungary by István Povedák. Povedák 2009, 2011.

⁹ Campbell 1949.

mission from the Vatican to go to the communist East and to motivate priests and lay people to establish grassroots groups in the interest of passing on the Christian faith.

P. Bulányi's long road led him to very difficult tasks from organizing a few Christian communities through the prison of the Rákosi regime to being expelled from the Hungarian Catholic Bishops' Conference and from the broader Roman Catholic community as well. This long way can be seen as a road of trials.

But the next stages – named by Campbell as a typical way or circle of a hero – are not applicable to Rev. Bulányi's story. Therefore, in Campbell's logic we can call the life-course of Rev. Bulányi as a heroic way to the deadlock or to a labyrinth with no exit.

In his classic work Campbell defined¹⁰ hero as used in another framework too. "The Hero is the man or woman who has been able to battle past his personal and local historical limitations to the generally valid, normally human forms" – Campbell writes.

In the context of communist persecution of religion and church a very big part of the tyrannized society was full of fear and paralyzed by it. Heroes of the faith were capable of controlling their fear and taking the risk of an active pastoral care. Understood in this way Rev. Bulányi can also be seen as a heroic figure of faith as a hero who battled his personal fear and the prescribed roles of the regime.

The psychology of the hero

Robert A. Segal differentiates between heroes of the classic and contemporary area contrasting the main values of these kinds of personalities. His contrast seems to be more a comparison between heroes with transcendent or in other words, holy values on the one hand and those without these kinds of values on the other. In a Christian approach we would like to make comparison between saints and heroes.

"The present-day hero is often lowly even within the human community – more the outsider than the insider, more the loser than the winner, more the villain than the savior. The contemporary hero is not a once great figure who has fallen but a figure who never rises. [...] Persistence replaces success; survival replaces achievement. Old-fashioned heroic virtues like courage and duty give way to new ones like irony and detachment. Today's hero, for example, is heroic in persisting without success."¹¹

According to Segal's comparison, Rev. Bulányi belongs more among traditional heroes, because he successfully aimed to be a follower of Jesus as he acknowledged him, and his vision of the Catholic Church aimed to mirror the Kingdom

10 A similar definition is found in the Brill Dictionary: "A hero is an individual who stands out from the crowd of ordinary persons by his corporeal or spiritual assets, and who provides a model for ethical orientation." Stuckrad 2007: 850.

11 Leeming, Madden and Marlan 2009: 393.

of God known from the teachings of Jesus. But reading the Segal's comparison we may feel that his description is not nearly enough to characterize Bulányi as a hero. Some aspects form Segal's image of a hero may correspond with Bulányi's life style, but Segal's main approach is too far from the whole phenomenon called Bulányi.

Collective representations

The role of modern (national) heroes is explained by the Brill Encyclopedia of Religion in the context of collective representations. Heroes are important for constructing a sacral reality that is for the collective's survival the *sine qua non*. Followers of the national hero use him for strong identification with the nation as virtual reality and therefore, they feel free to destroy themselves and all the enemies of the sacred nation.

"Collective representations are necessary dynamic patterns of orientation, which must not be plugged up in dank traditionalism in resistance to reasonable correctives. The penalty for doing so will be ideological petrification, in which they will lead the public concert and discord into blind alleys. Through the repeatedly objectified belief in which the collective comes forth as if it were a subject of activity endowed with consciousness, this collective survival – or rather supra-life – can advance to the status of a 'sacred reality' that would stand above the constant train of individual realities and condition them. This 'reality' not only becomes an object of worldly and pious wishes; on the contrary, as historical experience has shown, it can become one that will seem to justify nearly any sacrifice – of oneself or of others – and any crime. Thus, the fiction of the vital political body too has contributed to the appearance that force, persecution, and annihilation were necessary for the 'self-preservation of the life of the collective', at the cost of actual, concrete lives."¹²

Or more general in an other handbook from Brill: "Regarded socio-psychologically, the hero is a symbolic leading figure, and serves his venerator in terms of an identification with a common, ideal 'I'."¹³

The importance of symbolic figures for building and defending national identity we can transpose to the religious field of society as well. The systemic logic of identity building is in the case of nationalism the same as in the case of religion. Indeed, processes of identity building itself can be considered as a genuine religious process or reality. But for us now what is more important regarding collective representation to focus on is the change of the collective, which still needs and uses the hero's presence. For a short term analysis the change of the affected population remains hidden, but a long term analysis is able to show this modification. Regarding the interpretation of the person Rev. Bulányi as a hero it is necessary to differentiate between at least three different periods. The first is the period

12 Betz 2007: 424-425.

13 Stuckrad 2007: 850.

of direct and strong persecution of religion and churches, 1948-1974. I usually refer to this period with a biblical reference as the Egyptian captivity. The second period from 1975 to 1990 is the time of indirect religious persecution which can be symbolized with the Babylonian captivity. And the third period is our present time from 1990 on with the biblical metaphor of the recapturing of Jerusalem. During these three periods we can identify three different discourse situations in Hungarian society correlating with the symbolic role of Rev. Bulányi.

In the first period which I named the period of Egyptian captivity, persons like Bulányi were Christian witnesses or with the original Greek word, *martyrs*. Even in the period of total control of publicity through whispering propaganda very few Christian people knew that there were a lot of Catholics and Protestant who do not turn to apostasy. Memories of martyrs were important for keeping the faith.

In the second period referred as the Babylonian captivity the public discourse situation changed profoundly. The communist propaganda filled the media with the talk of a "good relationship between church and state". Although the control over the churches was still total and for all insiders there was no question that the church was anything but free, the work in the movements aimed to save the original Christian mission. Central figures of the Christian grassroots movement – by far not only Bulányi – symbolized at that time the allegiance to the original message of the Gospel and to the freedom of churches. But in the period of the indirect persecution or in other words, the instrumentalization of the church, we can observe a tension between the para-official small group movements and the instrumentalized official church. The conflict of interest between church and state slowly entered into the church itself and caused inconsistency. The longer the period of communist control lasted, the more importance was accorded to the survival logic in the churches as well. In this period Bulányi represented a more radical strategy with continual criticism of the relationship between Roman Catholic hierarchy and the communist government. One of the most important consequences of his strategy was the separation of his movements not only from the collaborating hierarchy and its followers but from most other movements as well. The clearer his critics became, the more he and his Bokor-movement was ghettoized and lost their martyr character for the Roman Catholic public.

In the third mentioned period – after the Babylonian captivity – all societies of Central and Eastern Europe were challenged by the process of coming to terms with the past, even with the past of the churches as well. Most of the characteristic figures of the underground church were to work in the official church after the collapse of communist regime and were often given hierarchical functions. The other group of former heroes with more critics on the hierarchical line of his own country and of the *Ostpolitik* of the Vatican¹⁴ was mostly excluded from the mainstream of the church renovation. For Rev. Bulányi himself the most difficult experience was the lack of his rehabilitation and fall into indifference. Although

14 Stehle 1975.

Bulányi's case is special he is absolutely not alone in losing the role of the hero of the faith because of the plurality of public discourses.

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WHY A SCHOLAR IS REGARDED AS A SAINT IN THE 20TH CENTURY?

The case of Sándor Bálint

I must begin with a brief biographical sketch: He was born on 1st August 1904 in Szeged-Alsóváros, in a simple peasant family of paprika growers. After his father's early death his mother brought him up alone and had him educated. Through his relatives he knew from the inside the peasant society of Alsóváros and the traditional way of life, including the practice of religion, that he later studied.

He matriculated at the school of the Piarists. He graduated, majoring in Hungarian and history, from the university in Szeged that had fled to this city by the Tisza in 1921 after the Romanians occupied Kolozsvár. In 1929 the country's first department of ethnography opened here under the direction of Professor Sándor Solymossy. Sándor Bálint became an unpaid research student and later assistant lecturer, qualifying as a lecturer in 1934.¹

From 1931 to 1945 Sándor Bálint taught at the Catholic teacher training school in Szeged. He also gave lectures at the teacher training college and the university.

Between 1945 and 1948 he was also active in politics as a member of parliament representing the Democratic People's Party, a Christian organisation.² After the communist takeover in 1948 he suffered the consequences of that activity for the rest of his life. In 1947 he was appointed a full university teacher to the Department of Ethnography at Szeged. Between 1951 and 1956 he was deprived of the right to teach. It was only after the 1956 revolution, from January 1957 that he was able to teach again. After prolonged police surveillance, in 1965 he was given a suspended prison sentence on trumped up charges and in 1966 he was forced to retire.³ However, it was during his years in retirement that he wrote a series of major works summing up his findings.

The communist secret police began to monitor his activity from 1945. Historians have published the records of his police surveillance – they are instructive reading.⁴ Sándor Bálint died in Budapest on 10th May 1980 following a road accident.

That is his life in brief outline.

Sándor Bálint, professor of ethnography at the university of Szeged died 31 years ago. Following the change of system in 1990 a street, school, cultural centre and dance ensemble in Szeged have been named after him. A memorial tablet was

1 Barna – Juhász – Pusztai 2004.

2 Csapody 2013.

3 Barna – Juhász – Pusztai 2004.

4 Kahler 2002., Bálint László 2004.

placed on the since demolished house where he was born, his statue stands in the Szeged Pantheon and another in the district where he was born, in Mátyás square in Alsóváros. One of the lecture rooms in the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology bears his name with a memorial tablet on the wall. All this indicates that he is a respected figure in Szeged society, regarded as an example at the university and admired by the community.

My short paper attempts to trace the process of why Sándor Bálint became an example in his lifetime and how respect for him grew immediately after his death? How did his beatification begin?

There have been great changes in the world in the three decades since his death. There is an enormous difference between the Hungary of three decades ago and today. At the time of his death we were still in the years of the dictatorship of the proletariat called socialism. There was little hope of change in the society that had fragmented into individuals. The Iron Curtain was still in place. There was a shortage economy in Hungary and Marxist ideology ruled supreme. There was only one organised institution and alternative to the socialist system, namely Christianity, the Christian churches and to a certain degree scholarship and the arts. To be a member of a church or to live as a Christian intellectual, a scholar or an artist meant that the individual became to some extent independent of the socialist regime. But the price was second-rate citizenship. In all the socialist countries the Christian intelligentsia was isolated, impoverished and had limited opportunities to set an example. The classical ideal of European culture was forced into the defensive in face of atheism, naturalism and existentialism. It was only after the 2nd Vatican Council that it started to become active – in an ecumenical spirit.

This was how Sándor Bálint lived: he was a Christian intellectual. He was an intellectual, that is, he was capable of creating standards, he sought the answer to man's most important question: the meaning of being, the spiritual or value aspects of being. As an intellectual, a member of parliament and a teacher he accepted responsibility for solving the tasks facing society. For Sándor Bálint the basis and fulfilment of this was his Catholic faith, the revelation of Jesus. In addition to his scholarly activity, his denominational commitment, but with a strong ecumenical character (Jewish, Protestant Orthodox) must be stressed. At that time such an attitude set an example.

And it was precisely for these qualities that he was rejected by official Hungary of that time. Those who rejected him embraced different values: they were the representatives of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the communists, the socialists. The preachers of atheism who opposed the church and religion, the internationalists who opposed the nation. And who held power for 45 years. It irritated them that there was a man they could not break, who represented a different set of values, way of thinking and way of life. But who, for precisely that reason was respected and loved by his contemporaries.

His most characteristic quality was loyalty. Loyalty determined his whole life at a time when the official ideology, the authorities represented a radical break

with all aspects of the past, when others bowed to this pressure and abandoned their earlier values. He was loyal to his people, to his origins, to the peasantry of Alsóváros. Sándor Bálint was an intellectual of peasant birth who, even as a university professor, never forgot his roots. He lived his whole life in Szeged, his birthplace, and devoted a great part of his work to the city. He wrote several books on its cultural history and ethnography. The city of his birth gave him nothing in return. Following the communist takeover after the Second World War he was entirely ignored. This caused him much sorrow and towards the end of his life he even thought of moving away from Szeged. He did not receive the recognition he deserved from his discipline or support from his colleagues at the university.

His Christian love of his fellow men was regarded as naivety. He was warm, open and helpful with everyone. He was loyal to his friends, to the persecuted even in time of danger. He helped those in trouble during the persecution of the Jews as well as in socialism. He was the only one who took in to his home the medical student who was sentenced to prison for his role in the 1956 revolution and as a result was only able to complete his university studies a decade later.

His financial problems hindered his work, they were trials for man and spirit, and were accompanied by political and ideological exclusion. His loyalty to his faith, his convictions, his Hungarian identity and his people meant that he was excluded from local and national society in a dark political period of counter-selection. Beside his friends, he was surrounded by an army of informers. Even people he regarded as his friends wrote police reports on him. Despite this, he wrote in his diary: "I praise you Lord for my desolation, ... I praise you for the heavenly desert of my days, I praise you for the love you drew from my suffering and for the peace, for the smile born out of tears."

He was loyal to his teaching service, although he was banned from teaching from 1951 to 1956. He regarded himself first and foremost as a teacher and educator. He remained loyal to his faith at a time when it was a disadvantage to be religious, especially for a teacher. He remained loyal to his church. Loyal to his native land, to his Hungarian identity, to his mother tongue, even to his dialect. He followed values that few people dared to embrace openly in face of the authorities. "I wanted to awaken people and students to the heavenly postulates. It is not possible to help them: they regard love as weakness. They spurn it, while they also long for it" – he wrote in his Diary.

He also remained loyal to scholarship. He represented a sound scholarly basis at a time when a knowledge of Marxist ideology and party membership were what counted most. He did not adopt the Marxist views and phraseology. Instead, he withdrew. He had an encyclopaedic knowledge: he was equally at home in languages, architecture, history of literature, history of music, history of art, history, geography, church history, liturgical history, ethnography and folkloristics. Listening to music, especially Mozart, often served to restore his inner harmony. He brought a complex approach to teaching his subjects, both at the Szeged teacher training college and at the university. He was a very influential teacher. His still living students speak of him with affection, respect and recognition.

He regarded it as his vocation as a scholar and a professional to raise peasant culture into the national culture. Similarly to the work of Béla Bartók, whose concert in Szeged in 1925 confirmed the 21-year-old young man in the recognition and acceptance of his life's task and in shaping his attitude. This was the period, in the first half of the 20th century, when the big social changes also reached the peasantry living in rural areas. The peasant question, the question of the Great Plain became one of the important problems of social thinking in Hungary.

One of Sándor Bálint's important research areas was the investigation of vernacular Christian religious practice. In this he was a pioneer in Hungary. He was one of the leading experts on this subject in Central Europe. As a child Sándor Bálint was able to see, experience and observe in the peasant community of Alsóváros the last flickering of an autonomous and self-sufficient religious practice outside the church with roots reaching back to the 17th-18th centuries. Communal religious practice, pilgrimages, orality, a different, holistic world view that was often described as mediaeval but that is now again felt as a demand, all played an important part in this. With this he performed an internal mission within his own church, directing the attention of the priesthood to the values of popular religion that had earlier been disdained. The priesthood accepted this and supported his work. Sándor Bálint enjoyed the solidarity of the church leaders.

His study of popular religious practice led Sándor Bálint to many new recognitions. Already in the 1930s-1940s Sándor Bálint saw the "people" as much wider than the peasantry, extending the definition to all social strata and groups that had a communal-type culture. His major work, a synthesis of Christian feasts "*Karácsony, Húsvét, Pünkösd*" (Christmas, Easter, Whitsun) reached several editions, and "*Ünnepi kalendárium*" (Calendar of Feasts) is not only one of the most sought after books in Hungarian libraries but it also an important teaching handbook and aid. It draws on Sándor Bálint's vast knowledge of ethnography, folkloristics, cultural history, art history, church history, history of literature, theology, liturgical history, history of music and linguistics.

He recognised sadly but with an accepting soul, that his scholarly advancement was blocked on ideological grounds in the new system of scholarly qualifications based on the Soviet pattern. He was not even allowed to submit his academic doctoral dissertation on the nutrition culture of Szeged.

On his rare foreign research trips – because the authorities did not allow him to travel – he came to the conclusion that "The only path for Central Europe is universalism, the co-existence and alliance of peoples and cultures, solidarism rising above linguistic contingencies, rebirth in the community of Christian faith and the European past" – as he wrote in his Diary at a time when no one was yet speaking of European solidarity or the European Union. But for him the basis of this was the Christian faith that Europe no longer embraces.

His private life was also troubled. His marriage disintegrated and was annulled by the church. But he remained loyal to his wife, adopting her child and supporting it throughout his life. He devotedly nursed his wife through her long sickness. Neglect, harassment and financial problems made his life difficult and

impeded his research work. Even so, at the end of one such difficult year he wrote in his Diary: "Lord, I thank you for this year too. ... I thank you that you did not pamper me and yet you looked over me with mercy and cared for me. You allowed the world to humiliate me again and again, but your consolation came without delay. You placed heavy crosses on me at home but you did not allow me to collapse under their weight. You know me better than I know myself."⁵

He knew his goal but he saw his own limitations and the obstacles raised by the 20th century. He observed the change in the world with a critical eye: "The focus of tasks is no longer man but performance. ... the disintegration of the social organism, the atomisation of the family, the sad loneliness of the individual has begun ..."⁶ "What crooked routes we take instead of the straight path: we confuse asceticism with sport, mysticism with psychoanalysis, faith with myth, the personality with the individual, the community with the mass, the sacred with the satanic heroism of hatred, Christ's wise kingdom with party discipline, joy with entertainment."⁷ These sentences could still be applied today.

In our laicised world he followed Christian (Catholic) values. He represented and followed Christian social, moral and religious values, applying them in his life. He set an example, showing that it is quite possible to live this way. He often wrote about this in his still unpublished Diary. "God, above all, does not want us to proclaim his glory, but that we should be his glory."⁸ His diary entries reflect his decisive, direct encounter with God.

Sándor Bálint "theoretically, ethically and ritually built up the way" in which he identified with his goal. (19-20.) And his goal was Jesus ("I am the Way, the Truth and the Life."). He built his morality on this, this motivated his deeds and shaped his view of the world. "We must obey God rather than men" – he wrote in his Diary.⁹ His religiosity was thus a certain way of thinking and seeing, his morality. This gave him the strength of spirit to bear his trials: the disintegration of his marriage, the charges brought against him in the court, his day-to-day problems. In this connection he wrote the following thoughts: "Lord, you defeated me, to raise me up to yourself. You took away everything, to give me the gift of yourself."¹⁰ "Man can bear more than he is capable of: that is the miracle of Christianity."¹¹ Given the right of last word at the end of his trial, he said: he would not like to know who it was that brought him there because he did not want such knowledge to arouse anger in his heart.

In the second half of the 20th century Hungarian society saw embodied in the person of Sándor Bálint the classical European human, scholarly and Christian values (work for the community, the service done for others, loyalty, unselfish help, humility) that the socialist system wished to deprive him of by force of

5 Bálint w.y. 58.

6 Bálint w.y. 89.

7 Bálint w.y. 37.

8 Bálint w.y. 70.

9 Bálint w.y. 35.

10 Bálint w.y. 63.

11 Bálint w.y. 9.

power. In this situation it was important – especially for the intellectual strata of society – that there is a person who represents these values with his life and deeds, someone to look up to, who can be regarded as an example. His life gave everyone hope. In the strong respect of Szeged and vicinity for Sándor Bálint, these circumstances shaped the desire to see him officially recognised as an example, as blessed. In the late 1980s circles in Szeged and among intellectuals began the initiative for his beatification, that was officially taken up by the church diocese and is still being pursued.

Finally, we can say with Saint Augustine: *Martyrem non facit poena, sed causa* (the cause, not the suffering, makes genuine martyrs).

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Sándor Bálint (Photo: Miklós Lantos)

THE THIRD TWIN: A POST-MORTEM IMAGE OF THE POLISH PRESIDENT LECH KACZYŃSKI.

On the performative power of mourning¹

Deaths of well-known personages often cement their place in the halls of fame. Death at the height of popularity guarantees a place in people's memory; especially if it is a tragic, unexpected, unjust death. Yet the case presented herein illustrates not the reinforcement and confirmation of great fame through death, but a transformation of an image after death: a transformation of a public figure who had been unfavourably assessed into a national hero.

The title expression "third twin" I have borrowed from Lech Kaczyński's sympathizer Zdzisław Krasnodębski, who in the newspaper article² *Już nie przeszkadza* described the emergence of the president's new, post-mortem image in the media – an image very far from his image broadcast by the same media when he was alive and equally far from the manner of presenting the president's twin brother Jarosław. The aim of this article is also to analyse the formation process which the image of the tragically deceased president has undergone, and to define cultural processes and phenomena that shaped this image. The name "third twin" is therefore absolutely not meant as mockery; yet, in contrast to Krasnodębski's text, it is also not meant to convey criticism. The paradox it contains is intended to bring out the ease with which a media image is formed and public figures are whitewashed or vilified. I intend to demonstrate that the case of the formation of Lech Kaczyński's post-mortem image was exceptional, because this process resulted not only from the cool-headed propagandist or political calculation, but was additionally influenced by both current and long-standing cultural phenomena, characteristic to the Polish culture or extant in many cultures, resulting from experiencing the so-called traumatic death.³

1 The author is a holder of a scholarship Start of the Polish Science Foundation, edition 2013.

2 The majority of texts cited herein are press articles, both from daily newspapers and from weekly and monthly publications which constitute an arena for airing the views of definite political milieus and opinion-making circles. However, I cite them not only to demonstrate the differences, and the nascent tensions, between the perceptions of the Smoleńsk air crash, but also because many of those texts were written by social and political scientists or philosophers and constitute attempts at interpreting social and cultural phenomena which Poland faced after April 10, 2010.

3 Cf. Kear, Steinberg 2002; Margry 2007. The term adopted from *Memorializing traumatic death* Margry and Sánchez-Carretero 2007.

Lech Kaczyński

Lech Kaczyński (1949–2010), a lawyer by education, was associated with the Polish political scene for a long time. Before the change of the régime, he was active in political opposition movements, in the Workers' Defence Committee (Komitet Obrony Robotników, KOR) and in the Solidarity; with the latter also after the fall of communism. He was a senator in the years 1989–91 and a member of the Parliament in 1991–93. In the latter half of the 1990s his political activity was markedly less dynamic. He was a founding member of the Porozumienie Centrum political party and in 2000 he was appointed Minister of Justice. The new party, Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, was founded in 2001; Lech Kaczyński was associated with it until the end of his life, although he officially relinquished membership upon assuming the presidency of Poland. In the years 2002–5 he was President of Warsaw, and in 2005 he was elected President of Poland.

Lech Kaczyński's political career is strongly connected with the figure of Jarosław Kaczyński, his twin brother. They were in the opposition together, then in Porozumienie Centrum, finally in the Prawo i Sprawiedliwość party that brought them their greatest political achievements. The media openly speculated to what extent Lech Kaczyński's political views were dependent on those of his brother; he was reputed to be yielding to Jarosław in political matters. Suffice it to say that they were usually referred to as "the Kaczyński brothers" in the media and on the political scene, and that their shared actions and common political line were taken as granted.

Lech Kaczyński was a right-wing politician, referring to the Polish patriotism, history and heritage. He supported the traditional family model and Catholic values, and he was opposed to liberal policies. He presented the vision of a strong Poland, unyielding to the pressure of other states and limiting external influences. His policies were often perceived and criticised as too insular and nationalistic.

During his presidency, the media rarely referred to Lech Kaczyński in favourable terms; he was pictured as either a bland or an inept politician. Comments as to his actions being instigated and manipulated by his brother were perpetual.⁴ He commanded considerable support, but the mainstream media dealt with the president relatively harshly. Despite his position, Lech Kaczyński seemed to be an insipid, marginal politician. His sudden and unexpected death changed all. As observed by Piotr Gliński and Jacek Wasilewski, "a historical figure was created" by the sheer power of the tribute paid to the president when he died.⁵

4 Cf. Łuczewski 2011: 142–145.

5 Gliński and Wasilewski 2011: 8.

The Mourning

In the morning of April 10, 2010 the media reported the news about the presidential aircraft Tu-154 having crashed in Smoleńsk in Russia.⁶ The air crash killed 96 people, including the President of Poland Mr. Lech Kaczyński and his wife Maria. News of the presidential couple's death immediately dominated the journalists' reports, overshadowing the equally tragic deaths of the remaining 94 passengers on the other hand, and on the other – starting from the very first reports of the disaster – creating an entirely new image of the late president. After death, Lech Kaczyński changed from a routinely criticised politician viewed as a “luke-warm” figure into a “hot” one – to some, a personification of all political and simply human virtues, to others, a respected adversary, but definitely no longer the vapid, colourless personage for which he was generally taken while alive.

The creation of the president's new image – or, according to his enthusiasts: the discovery of his true image – was due to a phenomenon described by both the scholars and the journalists as “the mourning”. It was a period of a few months during which the president's death and related events organized the operation of the media and, at least in the larger cities (especially in Warsaw), the public space as well. The beginning of the mourning is easy to define: it were the first moments after the report of the crash appeared in the media and people spontaneously began to gather in front of the Presidential Palace in Warsaw to light candles and lay flowers or condolence cards. It is far more difficult to mark the date when the mourning ended. I assume it to have been the closure of the so-called “struggle for the cross” in August 2010 (of which more further on); although it did not exhaust all the possible forms of mourning, this struggle cemented the then-current divisions and opinions, including the image of the late president and the attendant symbolism. Yet the issue of the Smoleńsk disaster has not been finally closed and still constitutes both a political and a journalistic topic in Poland, as confirmed by the consecutive waves of media interest it arouses.

The process of mourning partially coincided with the campaign before the early presidential elections (June – July 2010), ongoing in the background, and was observed with an enormous interest by both the media and the writer-journalists. These extraordinary circumstances and the dynamism of the entire phenomenon caused the mourning to evince a very strong performative aspect.⁷ The new image of Lech Kaczyński evolved during the mourning, when the distinct symbolism of a hero sacrificed for the fatherland was being constantly evoked.

⁶ The event was immediately hailed as one of the most important in the history of Poland (Żukowski 2011: 93) or, more cautiously, as a caesura in the Polish history. Rzegocki 2011: 119.

⁷ The text which turned my attention to the performative character of mourning was Peter Jan Margry's *Performative Memorials: Arenas of Political Resentment in Dutch Society* (2007); although the author focuses mainly on performativity of human expressions, and less on the general “outcome” of mourning, I owe this line of interpretation to him. Also, some aspects of performativity of memorial sites are discussed in the article *Memorializing traumatic death* by Margry and Sánchez-Carretero 2007.

The mourning was also a type of social drama. That mourning lends itself to such generalized cultural scenarios was pointed out already the first commentators, social scientists Michał Łuczewski and Joanna Tokarska-Bakir⁸ who spoke, respectively, of Girard's mechanism of a scapegoat⁹ (in reference to President Lech Kaczyński) and precisely of Turner's concept of social drama. The second conception seems to be decidedly more pertinent, although Tokarska-Bakir restricted herself to only mentioning the term "social drama" and further on wrote only of Poles transferring themselves, for the mourning period, into the liminal sphere. In my opinion, however, the potential to explain the events following the crash of the presidential aircraft lies exactly in the full scenario of social drama and its consecutive phases: crisis, breach, redressive action and reintegration/schism.¹⁰

The Breach

The first phase of social drama, the breach,¹¹ was the air crash itself. An airplane crashed; 96 people, including the presidential couple, were killed. A surrealistic scenario. The society's reactions were dominated by disbelief. The main word with which the reactions were described was "shock". Normalcy was violated. The media showed only reports of the disaster. Poland focused solely on that event; the outside world ceased to exist. The crash killed the president and his wife, as well as the country's political and cultural elite and, in addition, some attendants and the plane's crew. They were an official delegation to the ceremony commemorating an anniversary of the Katyń atrocities. This fact was not without significance in the creation of Lech Kaczyński's image, quite the opposite, it provided a foundation for the mythologization of the late president.

On that day, the television transmitted reports from the Katyń anniversary ceremony showing rows and rows of empty seats that were to have been filled by the victims of the air crash. At the crash site, prime ministers of Poland and Russia, Donald Tusk and Vladimir Putin, fiercely embraced each other. Politicians stopped spouting gall, even adversaries of the late president spoke of him with great respect, his sympathizers said they felt orphaned.¹² Far more people took part in the mourning for President Kaczyński than just those who declared straightforward support for his policies. Arkady Rzegocki writes that the mourning had a national character.¹³ It seems that this is a distinguishing feature of mourning after a traumatic death.¹⁴ The world seemed transformed, derailed from its usual path. In this

8 Łuczewski 2011; Tokarska-Bakir 2010.

9 I consider this line of interpretation to be rather risky, because it suggests that the disaster, as an "equivalent" of ritual murder, was in a sense desired by the president's adversaries.

10 Turner 1974: 38–42.

11 Turner 1974: 38.

12 Żukowski 2011: 94–95.

13 Rzegocki 2011: 123.

14 Cf. Margry 2007: 112.

case, the breach did not lie in the open conflict, but in a violation of the structures of everyday life. A Disaster had happened.

The Crisis: Stage I

The second phase of social drama is described by Turner in the categories of an increasing dissonance.¹⁵ At this stage, the crisis increases. In the case of the mourning for the victims of the TU-154 crash, the crisis pertained to the operation of the country. It ranged from an entirely real crisis, since, after all, the head of state, the marshal of the Sejm and other dignitaries had died, to crisis understood as an emotional experience endured by many members of the Polish society. Initially, however, it seemed that this crisis would take a different course than that described by Turner: not of a conflict, but of an exceptional unity. It was hoped by many that, in the aftermath of the disaster, a transformation of the society and the political scene would occur, that unification above divisions would be achieved.¹⁶ Tokarska-Bakir writes of Poles entering a liminal phase by fusing into a *communitas* that went through mourning together.¹⁷

Spontaneous gestures of commemoration occurred, such as lighting candles and laying flowers in front of the Presidential Palace, vigils and prayer meetings. In fact, such actions seem typical to the reaction to the so-called traumatic death.¹⁸ Significantly, however, such gestures were performed as much by the opponents as the sympathizers of the late President Kaczyński. The tragic death of the plane's 96 passengers united Poles at least in actions. Initially it seemed they would be united in some convictions as well. In the first days of mourning, not a single unfavourable word about the late president was uttered. The image of Lech Kaczyński broadcast in the media by politicians and journalists alike was uniformly sympathetic, even warm.¹⁹

This, of course, does not mean that his former opponents diametrically changed their views; neither does it mean that the late president's sympathizers changed their attitude towards their "enemies". Antipathies did not disappear (as the following days of mourning were to prove), but were suspended for the time-being. The atmosphere which dominated in the first days after the crash was that of unity, of community.²⁰ Such atmosphere was conducive to the presentation of as favourable an image of the late president as possible. In the media, the former bland politician was replaced by a true statesman: firm, consistent in his actions, adhering to inviolable principles, representing Poland nobly, almost a hero who fell on his post. A great president indeed.

15 Turner 1974: 38–39.

16 Gliński and Wasilewski 2011: 8–11.

17 Tokarska-Bakir 2010.

18 Cf. Kear, Steinberg 2002; Margry 2007.

19 Żukowski 2011: 101–103.

20 Tokarska-Bakir 2010; Żukowski 2011: 115.

At this time, the image of the president-as-a-man began to transform into the image of the president-as-a-symbol. The violation of normalcy resulted in the re-emergence of signs and symbols familiar and often evoked in the Polish culture. Already in the first days after the air crash, right-wing political essayists noted the incredible weight of symbols that accompanied the crash, which confirmed the tragedy's extraordinariness;²¹ the left-wing ones, in turn, watched in horror as men and women expressing opinions about the late president got mired in national myths and stereotypes.²² As the society began to plunge into mourning, so to speak, the president's death was endowed with symbolic meanings. This is because such a tragedy requires a higher purpose as an explanation, and this need is additionally reinforced precisely by a violation of normalcy. Turner remarked that liminality is favoured by "fructile chaos",²³ a creative drive that embraces the ability to create new meanings. In the case of the Smoleńsk air crash, the president's death was endowed with special meanings, while the history of Poland provided contexts for deciphering those meanings.²⁴

The aircraft's passengers were supposed to attend a ceremony commemorating the seventieth anniversary of the Katyń atrocities,²⁵ an event of incredible symbolic importance to contemporary Polish identity, especially to the identity of those who demanded a reckoning with the former, communist régime (and the late president was one of them). In fact, the Smoleńsk disaster began to be called "the second Katyń" or, just like film sequels, "Katyń 2". Lech Kaczyński's death was compared to the deaths of men barbarously murdered in 1940, and the site of the mass executions, and of the current air crash, was presented as the place of the past and present martyrdom of the Polish nation. Viewed against this background, Lech Kaczyński's death started to appear heroic. He died in the service of the fatherland, in its defence, on its altar, in an act of the highest patriotic sacrifice. The higher, symbolic dimension of the tragedy is also deeper-reaching. A cross of clouds was seen above the site immediately after the crash, and the birch with which the plane collided while landing (which was the direct cause of the crash) broke at the height of 666 centimetres (official data of the Chief Military Prosecutor Office).

The disaster, including the president's death, was interpreted as a Sign, the sign from God to the nation. Messianic interpretations of the tragedy, typical to the Polish romantic discourse,²⁶ emerged,²⁷ calling for a transformation and for

21 Terlikowski 2010; *Spektakl...* 2010: 102; cf. Rzegocki 2011.

22 Bielik-Robson 2010a; 2010b.

23 Turner 1986: 42.

24 Which in part results from Lech Kaczyński's penchant for the so-called historical politics, which results in very frequent references to selected events in the history of Poland. Cf. Michalski 2010; Drzazga-Lech 2011; Rzegocki 2011: 124–125; Terlikowski 2010, also Sutowski 2010.

25 The killing of over 20 thousand Poles by NKWD in 1940 by order of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

26 The so-called Polish Messianism is an extremely durable concept originating from the period of the Romanticism, in which Poland is perceived as Christ of Nations, whose dismal fate is a sacrifice that shall redeem also other (sinful) nations.

27 Cf. Bielik-Robson 2010a, 2010b; Rzegocki 2011: 125–127; Terlikowski 2010; also Duda 2010.

following a path assigned to Poles by God. The Polish nation, so often tried by history, has again been shown its mission.²⁸

The date of the aircrash, in turn – on the day before the Divine Mercy Sunday, a feast instituted and particularly esteemed by Pope John Paul II – was believed to point to a connection between Lech Kaczyński's death and the person of the Polish pope. The mourning for the president was many times compared to the mourning after the pope's death.²⁹ The qualities of a *communitas* did not endure long after the pope's death; it was believed that the Smoleńsk disaster had given the Polish nation another chance to unify. The sacrifice of the president's life (and lives of the other passengers) could not, after all, be in vain. Lech Kaczyński was being depicted almost as a redeemer of Poland, as a man who, like Christ, had made the highest sacrifice: the sacrifice of his life.

Initially, the nascent myth of the hero-president was not questioned. Some reports may have caused tolerant smiles, but the conviction that one ought not to speak ill of the dead, which in the Polish culture is important and binding, seemed to dominate. Neither was the violation of normalcy conducive to the criticism of myths, on the contrary, it favoured their acceptance, even if that acceptance was only superficial. The magnitude of the tragedy and the emotions it evoked determined the perception of the president, not objective assessments of his competence.

Yet in circumstances when emotions are reaching their zenith and people abide in a kind of ecstasy, a breakdown may be imminent; a smallest issue may spark dissension. And so it happened during the mourning for the victims of the Smoleńsk crash. A crisis based on a breakdown of the everyday order of affairs transmuted into a crisis that sprang from a serious conflict. It might be said that the mourning took on the form of a truly Turnerian crisis: one based on profound discord.³⁰

The Crisis: Stage II

Many people were aware that the society's initial unification in the face of the tragedy was only a transitory state; others, however, hoped that it would help to change the situation, in particular to change the so-called political culture in Poland. The first group appeared to be correct. Yet although the period of unification lasted for no more than a few days, that communal experience of the tragedy bore fruit: it cemented the positive image of President Lech Kaczyński. Public opinion polls indicated that favourable assessments of his period of office were decidedly on the rise; many of his former critics now saw him as a mature, competent politician.³¹ And then, right at the moment when it seemed that the necessary

28 Terlikowski 2010.

29 Rzegocki 2012: 122; on the mourning for the pope, see Klekot 2007; Zowczak 2007.

30 Turner 1974: 38–39.

31 Żukowski 2011.

early presidential election would proceed smoothly and that the campaign would dispense with the usual calumnies and mud-slinging on the part of politicians and political journalists, a bomb went off.

The idea that the presidential couple should be buried in the Wawel Cathedral emerged just a few days after the air crash (April 13). The cathedral is another place rich in symbolism – the cradle of the Polish nation, burial place of kings and the greatest Poles, a place of which one has to be worthy. The “Wawel issue” became the first serious bone of contention during the period of the mourning. The media immediately broadcast accusations that the presidential couple’s burial at Wawel was the idea of Jarosław Kaczyński, who thus wanted to earn some political capital before the impending elections.³² In reality, the plan to inter Maria and Lech Kaczyński at a place of such profound importance to Polish identity did not originate with the late president’s family (who, however, eventually agreed to the plan); yet the resultant debate, joined in by politicians, journalists, scholars and the cultural milieu, was very heated. An increasing rift divided the adherents of Lech Kaczyński and his brother Jarosław from their opponents, or simply people who did not support their policies. Politicization of the mourning ensued. The mourning became a platform for expressing political convictions and criticising the government, and especially for criticising policies different than those of the late president.³³ Since emotions caused by the disaster itself did not yet quieten, the conflict immediately escalated beyond measure. The mythologized image of the late president was put to trial. It began to be questioned – in spite of the symbolism of his death occurring in a symbolic place, many considered Lech Kaczyński unworthy of resting side by side with kings. But one fact proved irreversible: the performative potential of mourning fulfilled its task, the positive image of the president was cemented. Burial in the Wawel Cathedral was to crown this process.

Yet it was this very idea that caused the final dissension. Hopes for a unification above political and social divisions evaporated, while the conflict grew and, in the face of the election campaign, gradually acquired a profound political dimension. Adverse opinions about the late president, initially absent, were voiced increasingly often. Concurrently, the signs of mourning, including the burial at Wawel, provided an occasion for manifesting beliefs regarding the late president’s greatness, and the zeal with which he was being venerated by far exceeded all the initial expectations. The presidential couple’s funeral at Wawel on April 18, 2010 did not end the period of mourning. It was only a stage of it.

³² Cf. Magierowski 2010.

³³ Cf. Margry 2007.

Redressive Action

Turner writes that, in order to prevent conflict, the leaders activate certain mechanisms which are to restore the balance. These actions are either spontaneous or institutionalized, but their aim is the same: to restore order.³⁴ Official national mourning announced by the government was to continue until the presidential couple's funeral on April 18. It seemed that the government's intention here was precisely to avert the crisis and bring back life in Poland to its accustomed path. Conflict caused by the burial of Maria and Lech Kaczyński at the Wawel Cathedral made this redressive action utterly unsuccessful. From then on, phases of social drama: the crisis and actions aimed at alleviating the situation alternated, but none of the redressive actions assumed such a formal and ceremonial character as the first attempt: the official funeral celebrations. Ineffectiveness of this event resulted not only from the dispute over Wawel, but also from the fact that a section of the society proved unable to identify with this redressive action. Left-wing circles criticised the forms assumed by the mourning actions, especially the institutionalized ones; the chief reason for their dissatisfaction was the religious character of the celebrations, and complaints were heard that Poland lacked an alternative, secular scenario of mourning.³⁵

In spite of similarities in some mourning gestures (laying flowers, lighting candles, vigils etc.), some traumatic deaths are described by scholars without a religious element. In fact, Peter Jan Margry writes that mass expressions of mourning are a manifestation of processes taking place in the contemporary world, including secularization.³⁶ Poland provides a different example, however. During mourning for the victims of the Smoleńsk disaster, such gestures were of a religious nature³⁷ – candle-lighting and vigils were accompanied by prayers, and some condolences or entries in the memorial book laid out in the Presidential Palace were also prayerful. What is more, the remembrance and patterns of the mourning for Pope John Paul II in 2005 were still current in the general awareness. Then, too, people spontaneously went out into the streets, lit candles, laid flowers, gathered together for prayers, created spontaneous memorials.³⁸ The scenario was, so to speak, ready and waiting when the TU-154 crashed and its victims, especially President Lech Kaczyński, were being mourned. The mourning after the death of the pope was also the first in Poland to be so strongly present in the

³⁴ Turner 1974: 39.

³⁵ In my opinion, this type of criticism may only have the character of a postulate to change something in Polish culture, because all the patterns existing in this culture and referred to by the authorities and the society alike are, in fact, religious. A shard of the wreck of the presidential plane was attached to the dress of Virgin Mary of Częstochowa, a miraculous icon extremely important to Poles, the cult of which has been widespread in the entire Poland for centuries. The fact that death refers to the religious order of things, especially when that death is interpreted as a sign, seems to be a specific feature of the Polish culture. Erbel 2010; Tokarczuk 2010.

³⁶ Cf. Margry 2007: 116.

³⁷ Rzegocki 2011: 123.

³⁸ For a short characterization of spontaneous memorials, see Margry and Sánchez-Carretero 2007.

media. This trend continued and even strengthened in the case of mourning for the victims of the Smoleńsk crash.

The mourning for Pope John Paul II culminated in a holy mass celebrated in Piłsudski Square in Warsaw, a place associated with the pope and, again, a symbolic site filled with patriotic meanings and symbols of Poland's struggle for independence and fight with the communist régime. After his death, Lech Kaczyński was transformed into a similar symbol of struggle. Not only was his political path marked by the fight with communism and its residue in contemporary Poland, but he also died in a place where an ocean of blood had been spilled because of that system. Piłsudski Square seemed an ideal place for official funeral celebrations: firstly because of its location, secondly, because it was a traditional place where important state occasions were held, and thirdly, due to this tradition of holding masses for crowds of hundreds of thousands there. Yet the site also perfectly fitted the nascent image of Lech Kaczyński as an inflexible patriot to whom homage paid in that special place was due.

A holy mass in the intention of all the victims of the aircrash was celebrated on April 17 in Piłsudski Square. The altar was a wall of collated portrait photographs of the victims. Prayers for the dead were said also by Orthodox and Protestant clergy. In the evening of the same day, a holy mass in the intention of the presidential couple was held in the Warsaw arch-cathedral.³⁹ The character of both the official and spontaneous celebrations was thus obviously religious. Throughout the period of mourning, some actions of the opponents of Lech Kaczyński and his brother Jarosław also pertained to religious issues; they were signs of anti-mourning, so to speak, which undermined the president's new image.

The first marks of anti-mourning consisted in negative interpretations of adverse strokes of fate. Earlier comments regarding the late president's ineptitude on the international scene were repeated when the eruption of the Eyjafjallajökull volcano in Iceland and the ash cloud it emitted caused the closure of airspace across western and northern Europe for a few days. This prevented the majority of official delegations from attending the presidential couple's funeral ceremony. Lech Kaczyński's adherents were outraged by the cancellations of foreign politicians' visits, while his opponents were thus given a motive for coarse jokes about another "Sign from Providence".

In spite of negative reactions to the Wawel funeral and the renewal of criticism of the president, the mourning continued, although by then limited mainly to the late president's sympathizers and the media. However, its extent, force and duration were of an unexpected magnitude. It was certainly driven by the approaching presidential elections and the unfolding election campaign. The mourning was practically woven into that campaign and thus became a political tool and a method of expressing political convictions and views.⁴⁰ Interestingly, not only the mourners, but also the anti-mourners felt an insatiable need to express their views

³⁹ Since then, services commemorating the victims of the crash have been celebrated in the arch-cathedral; anniversary services in their memory are being held there still.

⁴⁰ Cf. also Margry 2007.

in the public sphere. The main memorial, a stretch of Krakowskie Przedmieście street in front of the Presidential Palace in Warsaw, was a bastion of remembrance of Lech Kaczyński, with continually burning candles and gathering crowds. Frustrated by the authorities' insufficiently active approach to properly commemorating Lech Kaczyński's sacrifice of life, his adherents raised a cross in front of the Presidential Palace. Its existence regulated the mourners' lives; this is where flowers were laid, candles lit and prayers said. Yet this religious symbol of reconciliation became a new bone of contention. Thus began the struggle for the cross.

The Warsaw authorities wished to restore the city to normal functioning; but one of the main arteries was constantly blocked by people paying homage to the late president and arguing for their political convictions. Crowds gathering at the Presidential Palace demanded a place in which to express their views, but at the same time an increasing number of milieus signalled their annoyance with this state of affairs. The cross was the last straw. The space in front of the Presidential Palace is, after all, a public space. Opinions began to be voiced that the cross ought to be removed, because Poland was a non-denominational state and the public space could not be transformed into a religious space. The conflict sparked after the proposal that this ephemeral and spontaneous memorial⁴¹ should become a permanent one.

The need to solve the problem of the cross and close the period of mourning, at least in the form of a Turnerian crisis that complicated normal functioning, became a burning necessity. When Jarosław Kaczyński lost the presidential election, the cross was viewed as the symbol of a continuing (political) fight in his name and the name of his tragically deceased brother. One of the first decisions of the newly elected President Bronisław Komorowski was to remove the cross from in front of the Presidential Palace and relocate it to the nearby church of St. Anne. The decision was erroneous insofar as it further antagonised the already deeply divided camps of the Kaczyński brothers' sympathizers and opponents. The self-styled "defenders of the cross" camped at Krakowskie Przedmieście; skirmishes with the police occurred.

Those who were opposed to both the presence of the cross and the protracted mourning in public space increasingly often manifested their irritation. Another media storm broke out when a group of the late president's opponents raised a cross constructed of Lech beer cans in front of the Presidential Palace. The prank found its conclusion in court, but this pastiche of the "struggle for the cross" clearly showed that at least a section of the Polish society was tired and annoyed with the mourning.

Writing about social dramas, Turner perceived the potential to avert crisis mainly in redressive actions.⁴² In the case of mourning, the redressive action: celebrations of the presidential couple's funeral, failed and led to an even more pronounced conflict. In the end, therefore, the period of mourning was interrupted roughly, by means of the command to remove the cross from Krakowskie

41 See Margry and Sánchez-Carretero 2007.

42 Turner 1974: 39–41.

Przedmieście and the ensuing cleaning of the street from traces of the mourning actions. The fact that a spontaneous memorial was located there is now confirmed only by a memorial plaque on the wall of the Presidential Palace. The remaining physical signs of the mourning were removed and the life of the city returned to normal. Only the media from time to time brought up the fact that some considered the mourning to be continuing.

The campaign against the advertisement of Lech beer was fought concurrently with the “struggle for the cross”. Three and a half months after the funeral, a giant advertisement banner was stretched against the entire wall of a hotel directly opposite the Wawel Hill. The slogan which was to entice clients to buy this beer was “Zimny Lech” [Chilled Lech]. This caused much disgust, media debates ensued, the brewery defended itself by saying that the banner’s location was ideal for advertising, but finally the banner was removed and the brewery apologised to all who may have been offended. Yet the president’s good name had not been secured for long, since the place of the advertisement of beer was taken by an advertisement of an energy drink with the slogan “O żyj i zwyciężaj”.⁴³ This is now-open provocation was mainly ignored, the advertisement perceived as no more than a distasteful attempt to stir a new sensation. Yet the affair constituted a precedent: it was again possible to speak ill of Lech Kaczyński. His post-mortem image was affected by fatigue caused by the lengthy mourning. The president’s image from before his death resurfaced in the media and the “third twin” again functioned alongside the original two. The criticised president re-emerged and became the butt of many jokes. Yet at the same time, his name – according to the new image: the name of a hero – was defended with more ardour and this fact echoed in all the media.

The mourning went on in the atmosphere of conflict, but emotions stirred by the disaster quietened down. The subsequent phase of social drama was reached not by means of a redressive action, but because the need for mourning expired; it was upheld only by a handful of the late president’s most faithful adherents.

The Schism

According to Turner, the last phase of social drama is reintegration or, if the conflict cannot be alleviated, sanctioning the dissent.⁴⁴ In the case of the mourning and its closure, the latter is relevant. Political divisions – mainly the gap between the adherents and adversaries of the Kaczyński brothers’ policies – were cemented or grew stronger.⁴⁵ They were to overshadow all other news in the media for a long time, and the Smoleńsk disaster is still being capitalized on by the Prawo i Sprawiedliwość party.

⁴³ The slogan contains a clever pun: it means “Oh, live and conquer” or, if read as one word, “Come back to life and conquer”. The adjective used in the previous slogan, zimny, literally means “cold” and may refer to beer as much as to a dead body.

⁴⁴ Turner 1974: 41–42.

⁴⁵ Rzegocki 2011: 120.

Yet the political conflict that grew out from the mourning was of a different character than previously. This is partially due to Lech Kaczyński's new image, which was to a certain extent the object of a political battle. Broadcasting and reinforcing it could bring success in the elections to one side of the conflict, whereas the other side could benefit from discrediting it. The post-mortem image of Lech Kaczyński not only for a long period of time organised the political and media life, but also provided a focus for the conflict which grew more powerful in the period of mourning.

Conclusion

Today the image of Lech Kaczyński no longer arouses such emotions as it did in the first days after the aircrash; neither does the discussion whether he was a good or bad president. The media invoke his person and his memory mainly on the anniversaries of the Smoleńsk disaster, but his adherents are still devoted to his memory. The myth of a president who sacrificed his life for the fatherland consolidated the Prawo i Sprawiedliwość electorate, a part of which is now organised in the "Solidarni 2010" movement and meets on the tenth day of each month to manifest its fidelity to the late president and the continuators of his thought.

The mourning is over. Sometimes, usually on the anniversaries of the Smoleńsk disaster, the press publishes attempts at a summary of what has remained of it. Emotions died down, the initial unity evaporated very fast. The performative aspect of the mourning, however, was not limited only to the ongoing activities of its participants or to the emergence of the new, post-mortem image of Lech Kaczyński. The mourning stirred some people to action; they have been engaged in political life ever since. It activated the Polish right wing, sanctioning and deepening the divisions in politics and persuasion on the one hand, and on the other setting a certain style of actions undertaken by right-wing movements. According to the right wing, causes of the crash of the presidential aircraft have not been duly investigated because the government of Poland gave in to Russia's pressure; thus the real cause of the crash remains a secret. The imperative to determine the correct version of events was evident in almost every field of the public sphere as a call to a battle for freedom and truth. This style of practising politics is unquestionably associated with the image of Lech Kaczyński as a model of a man who seeks the truth and devotes himself to fighting for freedom. He became a secular patron of actions aimed at discovering the truth about events in Polish history: the Katyń atrocities, the Warsaw Uprising, the Volhynia Massacre, the fortunes of the Accursed Soldiers in the period of the People's Republic of Poland, the Smoleńsk aircrash.⁴⁶

46 These are all events in the history of Poland information about which used to be manipulated and censored in the communist era. The Smoleńsk aircrash is symbolically one of them, since the Kaczyński brothers' milieu is of the opinion that the truth about the crash is still being suppressed by the governments of Poland and Russia.

The myth of Lech Kaczyński made a successful appearance in the Polish culture due to the performative potential of mourning. Even though it is not upheld by everyone, the image created after the aircrash, the “third twin”, and not his original media image is currently the point of reference in debates about the late president. The latter rarely functions on its own now; it is mainly an image stripped (falsely or not, depending on the persuasion) of the mythical aspect acquired after the crash. Regardless of whether a given statement is critical of Lech Kaczyński or complimentary to him, the dominant rhetoric refers to the assembly of features that evolved after the tragedy. Lech Kaczyński has grown into a hero who suffered martyrdom in the service of the fatherland. The interest in his person has now diminished; but the media still publish pertinent information and his biographies abound in the bookshops. His fame goes on, also in the symbolic dimension, because Lech Kaczyński has become a secular patron of an ideological campaign in which his adherents continue to fight.

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ONE FROM US, ONE FOR US. VIKTOR ORBÁN IN VERNACULAR CULTURE¹

Conceptualizing politicians as stars is not a new phenomenon; indeed, in addition to everyday language use, this can also be found in the scholarly literature. Perhaps the first sign of this – within democratic political systems – would be the cult of Winston Churchill and serial expressions of mass hysteria that followed the death of John F. Kennedy, which seemed to be repeated on a global scale in 1997 with the tragic death of Princess Diana. Scholarly studies on the latter were published in rapid succession.² The cult of personality that arose in various dictatorial regimes could be pointed to as the forerunner of all of this, which are expressions of the emergence of a cult rooted in the political realm, but in recent times certain studies have explored the folk expressions of these cults when a phenomenon forced from above becomes an internalized conviction of the individual.³

It is a commonplace that contemporary reality is thoroughly politicized. Political points of view prevail in almost all areas of culture, education, and the economy. As a rule, the outcome of this situation is that the political figures presented in the mass media become part of our contemporary popular culture and appear within the framework of “postmodern folklore” and its various forms (prose, poetry, jokes, rhymes, graphic art, paintings etc.) as well as in the area of morality. In parallel, popular culture has gained gradually more ground in politics as well. As a result, in politics, in the case of leading political figures, known attributes of stars in popular culture have also emerged. Contemporary political style is increasingly dominated by tabloidization and personalization. This includes a focus on the leader,⁴ which is characterised not only by the fact that political messages shift rather from organisations to individuals, but also by popularization, that is the representation of political events through the lives of ordinary people. This is all primarily realised through leading figures in politics. It is impossible to capture an entire party in the viewfinder of a camera. It is, however, possible to create an image when only one person is speaking and acting, the leader who represents the institution through his person. The personalization of politics increases the role of non-rational elements, such as the faith and trust invested in the charismatic power of the leader. A political leader may increase his or her acceptance through his or her personal power of attraction, image, and actions. When presidents and prime ministers are elected, their main role in this is not their political position, but rather their personal power of attraction and image

1 The research was supported by the OTKA NK81502 project, the MTA Bolyai Ösztöndíj project, and the MTA-SZTE Research Group for the Study of Religious Culture.

2 Walter 1999; Bowman 1999, 2001; Blackman and Walkerdine 2001; Daxelmüller 2003.

3 Belaj 2008; de Jonge 2008; Gabanyi 2000.

4 The term leader is used here to refer to a political leader, and it is void of any other implications.

and their ability to win loyalty among voters and to gain support and mobilize their followers. The trust of the believers is grounded in the leader's personal image, characteristics, and power of attraction – and therefore they evoke subjective emotions that cannot be explained through rational arguments. Personality becomes more important than political programme (or interests).⁵ All these operate in tandem with tabloidization⁶ and operate with the help of and through the mass media. The moral function of the media – primarily television – can perhaps best be observed in the case of star politicians as it is the message of politics that is most closely related to the worldview of the common people, their understanding of the world, value systems, and course of life. This medialization, however, also results in the need for politicians to develop internal and external value systems about themselves that satisfy the values of the consumers of mass media most thoroughly. As Kéri put it:

“It is not enough to be news, one must appear that way as well.... It is not enough to be attractive, interesting and worthy of news on one's own, it is not enough to bring in surprises again and again through newer and newer ideas, but one must also be able to represent symbolically the most important values of the particular political party through a colourful presentation. Personalization thus is not only representation, but also symbolisation. Thus, a political performance is not simply performance worthy of the media, but is also an amateur production that should also stand as its own refutation. One cannot simply be an excellent actor as there are professional actors for that; a politician cannot play a role as he is expected to be honest. A role cannot be a role because he must truly believe in the truth of what he is saying. Indeed, if he does not believe it, then he cannot expect his believers to do so.”⁷

From the beginning of this process, the political leader is no longer only a politician, but a media personality who is continually in the centre of the news; he is at the centre of public attention and becomes famous, and after a while a group of sympathizers from his party become distinguished as his followers, his believers. He has become a star but has also remained a politician.

In this regard, we must not forget about the phenomenon according to which contemporary political culture is structured more and more on the basis of archaic patterns. The message of politicians and political parties begins to resemble a religious worldview in part (1) because (a) it reflects a sort of thinking in totalitarian terms and (b) voting for a particular party implies the promise of a kind of earthly paradise and in part (2) because it reflects a way of thinking in binary oppositions. It uses only good or bad characters in absolute terms; thus, the good character provides a pattern to be followed by his followers, who can

⁵ Körösenyi 2003: 14.

⁶ Cf. Kiss 2003.

⁷ Kéri 2005: 88.

imagine themselves in the struggles of that figure. Their struggle is therefore no longer symbolic; it becomes a real duel. Each election campaign represents such a duel by now, when the prime ministerial candidates from the parties with the best chances fight against each other and are reduced to absolutely good or evil figures based on binary oppositions. After their struggle, pollsters hurriedly examine which one was more effective and which one was more able to convince the people of his own truth, ideas, and worldview.

In addition to symbolic struggles, politics by scandal have become the simplest and at the same time the most effective tool to illustrate the differences between political camps. According to Kéri, "In most cases, political scandals can most easily be traced back to some basic moral testimony. Therefore, the champions of heroic struggles and media triumphs can represent themselves in rather simple terms as representatives of values that have or may have outstanding significance in what is called identity politics. If a particular politician is lucky, he may more often come across as the angel and not the devil in relation to his or her opponent. ...[T]he leader and the message that is embodied by him every minute, which is spectacularly reduced to black and white truths, become the most important political message."⁸ (In fact, the opponent's followers make their judgement the same way, except, from their perspective, their own leader is qualified as good and the other as bad.) Here we see not only politicians as sources of information and news, but also a kind of political circus; that is, emotional responses of empathy are activated that are similar to those at sporting events. This competition, however, is not merely a sporting event. It is the clash of worldviews and moral world orders; that is, a newer function comes into play.

Viktor Orbán

Before I demonstrate the impact of star politicians on the folk culture of the postmodern age, I would note that I have chosen Viktor Orbán not because I support or oppose, follow or reject his personality, views, and actions, but because I find his figure well-suited to demonstrate my points.⁹ This may be concluded based on his political career since 1989, his constant presence in the news, his (symbolic) role in the eyes of his followers, the opinion his followers have of him, and his personality so inspirational in numerous areas of popular culture. The fact that Orbán's personality is ambivalent, that is, he is significantly rejected by the voters' camps among rival parties, while his acceptance reaches a similar scale among the voters of his own (party), does not constitute a rebuttal of my train of thought, but the exact opposite. The way researchers of civil religiosity have stated, the social view of civil religion is far from homogeneous, but this does not mean it does not exist. Similarly, we judge our historical heroes in different ways.

⁸ Kéri 2005: 89.

⁹ Viktor Orbán has been the prime minister of Hungary from 1998 to 2002 and again from 2010 to the present.

Many, for example, reject the figures of Lajos Kossuth or Imre Nagy, while others blindly join the ranks of their followers. This is how it is nowadays in connection with contemporary political figures. Viktor Orbán sharply divides public opinion, but it should also be noted that since the regime change he is the only Hungarian political leader who has continually maintained the support of a significant portion of society and his figure, due to effective media efforts, has been (neo)folklorized and has continuously been maintained within the folklore of the postmodern age. This role has resulted from the interplay of various factors.

One, his emergence in the public eye started in a situation that automatically predestined him to fill a significant symbolic function. In 1989, Hungary was characterised by a revolutionary climate. Orbán appeared in this situation in a politically sacred situation as the central figure of the rite connected to the reburial of Imre Nagy and his fellow martyrs on 16 June 1989. His speech that since then has become one of the symbolic acts of the political regime change in that political environment – according to historians dealing with the topic – pushed the boundaries of recklessness. A young man came almost out of complete obscurity and suddenly stood in the centre of a sacred event; he determined its atmosphere and with that to some extent also the course of political events to come. It was not merely a political event, but a rite with cultic significance, where national heroes, whom it was not allowed for us to remember, were buried with dignity.

These repressed emotions were set free by the reburial, and these emotions – for the millions following it through the media – were at the same time also re-interpreted in Orbán's speech. In that situation, that speech completed the catharsis, for which the majority of the society had been longing. He appeared in a seemingly prophetic situation, not as a politician, but as a preacher of sorts who constructs the new framework of interpretation of the way the past may connect to the present as well as outlining the possible salvific versions the future may hold for the present. It is worth re-examining certain segments of his speech from the perspective of reconstructing cultural memory.

“Since the beginning of the Russian occupation and the introduction of the communist dictatorship forty years ago, the Hungarian nation has only had one opportunity, has had sufficient courage and strength only once to make an attempt to achieve its goals set as early as 1848: these are national independence and political freedom. Our aims have not changed to date. We won't give an inch on '48 and thus we won't give an inch on '56 either. ...

These are the statesmen for us, those who even in the shadow of the gallows refused to stand in the same line as the murderers who decimated the society and those who refused, even at the cost of their lives, to deny the nation, which had accepted them and had put its trust in them. ...

We believe that we should not be grateful that we are permitted to operate political organisations today. ...

If we believe in our strength, we can put an end to communist dictatorship. If we are committed enough, we can force the ruling party to submit

*to free elections. If we keep our eyes on the ideas of '56, we can choose a government for ourselves that starts immediate negotiations that begins with the immediate withdrawal of Russian troops. If we have enough boldness to want all this, then and only then can we fulfil the will of our revolution. No one can believe that a one-party state could change on its own."*¹⁰

As can be seen from these excerpts, his speech was constructed on the temporal continuum of past-present-future, that is embracing all three dimensions of temporal existence in such a way that cultural memory could operate. As Assmann has also emphasised, memory not only reconstructs the past, but also organises the experience of the present and the future.¹¹

His first appearance resulted in quite extreme emotions in his audience. All of a sudden, he had some followers, while many rejected his new bold and revolutionary tone. These were also manifestations of generational differences since youthful fervour was not viewed as a considered and wise choice by a population that had lived through relative peace and quiet, which had been suffused with the authority of the party under the Kádár regime, while young people lined up behind him based on their conviction that a lot of tiny jumps would not get them over to the other side.

His political career and legitimacy tie him to Imre Nagy on the one hand but his relation to him is quite ambivalent. On the one hand, he could not follow Nagy since he had been a communist politician,¹² but at the same time he bowed his head before him in connection with the events of the revolution and his conduct during his false punishment. In this respect, it is interesting that the fervour of 1989 that was most characteristic of Sándor Petőfi and Lajos Kossuth was replaced by the political (ideological) orientation related to István Széchenyi,¹³ embracing the principle of considered measures, after Orbán became the head of government in 1998, which he also maintained during his second term as of 2010. Besides age-related changes in his own life, another important reason for this might have been that Széchenyi's political views and thus reforms to be achieved through considered political engagement, that is, based on the economic development of the country, were more acceptable for broader cross-sections of society than Kossuth's radicalism of 1848. It was then that significant changes were also introduced in Orbán's symbolic politics. His return from liberalism to conservatism and the emphatic appearance of the value system of Christianity are all elements

10 <http://www.fideszfrakcio.hu/index.php?CikkID=22> Access: 11 November 2008.

11 Assmann 2004: 43.

12 Imre Nagy, the martyred prime minister of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, considered himself a faithful communist until the day he was executed.

13 Sándor Petőfi was a poet of the 1848–49 Hungarian Revolution, one of the best-known figures of Hungarian poetry. He espoused radical liberal political views. Lajos Kossuth was a liberal politician, a governor of the country during the Revolution, one of the most well-known Hungarian statesmen. Count István Széchenyi has been considered the greatest Hungarian, one of the leading politicians of the Age of Reform and Kossuth's political opponent.

of this.¹⁴ It is neither my task nor my aim to judge Orbán's political endeavours, but it is important to stress that archetypes deeply rooted in folk culture also appeared in the process. Indeed, a kind of compensation can be observed, located behind the slogan "Dare to be great". After the idealized type of person during communism, the member of the proletariat made uniform and trained to economize, he outlined a new attitude which became popular since the little man no longer wished to stay little. He wanted to break out of his own insignificance. He wanted to perform great deeds, similarly to the way of the youngest hero of folk tales that comes from poverty but breaks out and performs great deeds.

Now, let us examine what sort of phenomena and changes symbolic politics have generated in the system and operation of popular culture. First of all, let us study the basis for all further impacts and cultic manifestations, the symbolic image that evolved around the personality of Orbán. In order for someone to become a star, it is necessary to have an organic relationship, a shared social background between the fans and the star. If it does not exist, the emblematic identification with the star does not develop and the fans do not feel that they belong together. Thus, they cannot project their own desires, and similarly they cannot identify with the struggles of the star. As far as the bond exists, all of these can be realised and the figure of the star – in this case, Orbán – can become, in a certain sense, what they themselves would like to become.

"I really don't know much about him or about politics as such or what exactly they did then or do now, but it's for sure that Orbán is a nice person. He's down-to-earth and he's more understandable than Gyurcsány.¹⁵ He's not as stuck up as him. But that doesn't make him a hero or anything like that. I just respect him, more than the others. ... Actually, I don't respect any other politicians but him."¹⁶

"Viktor is a family-centred man. He's a lot more human and honest than other politicians. He sees people's lives much better. So it's like when we're in the same boat. We're in the same boat, I think. He has five children. In that way too, he's got a big family too."¹⁷

The manifestation of this bond is when Orbán, a member of the larger community, is identified with the nation and is its sole saviour, having been granted

14 It is interesting to note that the reduction to binary oppositions appears in relation to ideological positionings as well. When I asked the interviewees to tell me in what ways Orbán was different as a person from his political opponents, in their opinion, I received the following answers:

"Medgyessy [socialist prime minister, 2002–2004] is a selfish bloke. He is bloody selfish.... Not like Széchenyi or Orbán!"

"Gyula Horn [socialist prime minister, 1994–1998] is a murderous beast! Quite an evil man. A good soldier for the system. If I mention '56, my blood starts boiling, even if I think about it or say the name of Imre Nagy. They are murderers, damn it, nothing more. They have to be fought against; there are no two ways about it. Viktor must beat them!" 31-year-old man from Szeged, 6 April 2006.

15 Ferenc Gyurcsány, socialist prime minister, 2004–2009.

16 32-year-old man from Szeged, 14 November 2008.

17 29-year-old women from Szeged, 14 October 2008.

almost messianic attributes on entering office. Orbán represents the nation as the leader. People expect him to solve all problems, even the ones that they themselves cannot solve. They expect him to lead them out of recession, create a flourishing economy and culture, and re-establish safety and public morality. Orbán is a politician, but these expectations refer to the totality of political life. However, if a politician is expected to introduce total changes that impact almost all walks of life, this person – in terms of functionality – is manifested as the object of a religious attitude.¹⁸ This is captured in expressions such as “Take care of us, take care of our Homeland,” which compare him to a patron saint and assign similar roles to his person.

*“Dear Prime Minister,
Thank you for your self-sacrificing and highly appreciated work, which you have done for us, for the Hungarian People, and for the Country. ... Only you and your party represent the right path ...”*

*“Dear Prime Minister,
Not a day, not even an hour passes by without me thinking about the upcoming elections and the future of the country. With all my respect, I ask you to take care of us, to care of our homeland. ... I ask God’s good blessing on all your work and efforts. Long may you lead the Hungarians!”*

*“Dear Prime Minister,
I wish you all the success, endurance, and boundless peace for your future work in the coming months. Make your dreams, which are also ours, come true. ...”*

*“Dear Orbán family,
I wish you happy holidays and many good blessings from God. May you have the strength to lead us out of this bleak situation. Go, Hungary, go! Go, Hungarians, go!!!!”*

“With all the warmth in my heart, I wish you and your lovely family peaceful Easter holidays full of spiritual renewal! Please rest because you are badly needed by our HOMELAND!”¹⁹

“From the ‘sacred mountain’ of the Székely people, the peak of Hargita in Madaras, I ask that the blessing of the Virgin Mother of Csíksomlyó should follow every step you take.”

18 This is what the cult of personality is about.

19 These quotations have been selected at random from the forum section of Orbán’s official homepage from 2002 to 2008. Available: <http://orbanviktor.hu/vendegkonyv.php> Access: 12 November 2008.

*"All better? I'm sure you are because God helps a Man like you to get better."*²⁰

The parts in cursive refer to the appearance of national identity and religion/religiosity. The sense of national belonging and communion with the nation is supported by "Take care of our Homeland" and "Go, Hungarians, go". Religious content is expressed by "I ask God's good blessing" and "peaceful Easter holidays full of spiritual renewal", which are aimed at a person who is able to "take care of our homeland" on his own since "only he represents the right path" in order "make the dreams of the nation come true" and "lead them out of their bleak situation". In connection with the texts, it is worth citing Ernst Cassirer: "We easily understand the assumption in savage life that all human powers and all natural powers can be condensed and concentrated in an individual man. The sorcerer, if he is the right man, if he knows the magic spells, and if he understands how to use them at the right time and in the right order, is the master of everything. He can avert all evils, he can defeat every enemy; he commands all natural forces. ... Yet, if modern man no longer believes in a natural magic, he has by no means given up the belief in a sort of 'social magic'. If a collective wish is felt in its whole strength and intensity, people can easily be persuaded that it only needs the right man to satisfy it."²¹

This is of course accompanied by a conscious image-making which attempts to meet as much as possible the needs of the masses. This is why we see the appearance of writings and images in some media, such as Internet sites, stressing his connection with the people – which are also created for propaganda reasons among other purposes. In this case we are not dealing with the construction of the folktale-like life path as seen in the case of other stars. We are not encountering the role of the youngest child, of poverty in childhood, of an early appearance of talent, of not being understood at an early age, and of resultant forced migration since these are not emphasised in the case of a star politician.²² In the case of star politicians, what counts is not their own childhood and past (and it is not about the dubious political past that has come to light again and again in the case of certain politicians) but primarily their future, the image of the future that he is able to promise to the community through his own person.

*"It was different in his day. There was still a future then. Now there's not. There's nothing now. The young had opportunities then, but what have they got now? Nothing. You can leave the country, and then that's it."*²³

²⁰ www.facebook.com/orbanviktor Comments from 2 October 2013. Access: 24 November 2013.

²¹ Cassirer 1974: 281.

²² Cf. Povedák 2011.

²³ The interview was conducted in 2008, when Orbán was in the opposition. 32-year-old man from Szeged, 14 November 2008.

*"I'm sure he would have done it! The situation would be different now. He cared about the people. Of course, he was a Christian. Or he still is.... Help your neighbour and God will help you."*²⁴

In the event that the development of the vision for the future is received with success – for example, elections – in the next step, his present and past come to the centre of public attention. This step is already linked to the process of creating stars. It is a process guided from above, but it is absolutely necessary for the community to be receptive and to have a demand for it. This is what comments on Orbán's homepage demonstrate:

*"Dear Prime Minister,
We were so moved that for long minutes my wife and I were mulling over how we should express our appreciation after we looked at your homepage on the Internet. We thank you for giving us ordinary citizens a glimpse of your life and the details of your work. We would like to encourage you with this little rhyme of ours since even you may have hard days:*

*When the skies above turn grey,
Just think back to the day
They'd kick the ball and race
And the tyre ruts they'd chase:
Their future, their world, their dream....
So don't forget that team
Still with you on that day
When the skies above turn grey."*²⁵

We can see community censorship is still in place today, albeit not in a preventive form. However, it follows the publicity created by the media in such a way that this kind of censorship determines the extent to which a particular person becomes a leading personality in the eyes of the people in the age of the consumer society. It is partly because of this communal need that we see images (see Annex) in which Orbán converses spiritedly with the common man, the retired and the young, about their everyday lives, problems, and joys. The face of Orbán that can be seen in these images proves that he is interested in the people and in the fate of his nation, and he communes with them. (One of these is the image in which Orbán is a tour guide for school groups in Parliament.) What the receiving community concludes from all this is that the politician, regardless of how great a man he has become, is the son of the people. He has not left them, the little people. He is a person who aids people in their problems even if it inconveniences him, such as in 2001 and then in 2006, when he himself appeared in wellingtons to assist the flooded regions and pitched in to stack sandbags to shore up an embankment.²⁶

24 28-year-old man from Szeged, 22 October 2008.

25 <http://orbanviktor.hu/vendegkonyv.php> Access: 12 November 2008.

26 <http://origo.hu/print/itthon/20060403gumicsizmaban.html> Access: 12 November 2008.

"What I like about Viktor Orbán is that beyond his big family and tough governing style, he always enjoys himself, he is a real MAN because you can't pretend to do that."

"Yes indeed, it is like he is one of us ordinary people. That's why he is such an empathetic soul because he never forgot where he came from!"

"Viktor Orbán is one of us, he just did something very well, and actually knowledge is a great power. And he knows how to put that to use!"²⁷

"He's religious man. I think he gave his help sincerely, and there was no politics in that. Why couldn't he also be helpful? Because he's a politician? I believe in him. Look at him now too. They are the ones helping people. That is, they'd like to help people, but they are watching out for them and they want to lower taxes. That would be good for us, wouldn't it? It might be bad for the state, but it would be good for us. This is what matters to Orbán and his people, while that is what matters to Gyurcsány and his people."²⁸

This role can be authenticated, not only through personal contacts but also through the ordinariness of his present-day life and private sphere. However much Orbán has become a national leader and however much he works for the country and the people, he also has a private life that he enjoys as much as those for whom he works as leader. Reports appear on the news that are not about his struggle with his opponents, but about the peaceful daily lives and events that are so ordinary that perhaps they do not really represent news value but still play an important role.²⁹ This is the news through which we can learn about the value system and morality of the politician. We learn that Orbán is also religious since we can see images of him appearing in church or blending in the crowd of pilgrims without any fuss at the Whitsunday feast in Csíksomlyó. We find out that he likes sports, cheering at football matches (and not in the VIP section of the stadium). Moreover, he even plays football himself. Besides all this, he is a family-centred, responsible father. (We can also read about his family life, his five children, and his wife, and we learn that he would like to have twenty grandchildren.) "Yesterday, it was my turn to tell Flóra a tale, by heart, mind you, because they appreciate it a lot more than when you read it. I tried to be entertaining with the story of the little pigs and the wolves since her pacifier was just taken away forever 'by the cat' and my little angel finds that difficult to accept."³⁰ He likes being natural.

²⁷ Comments from 29 October 2013. Available: www.facebook.com/orbanviktor. Access: 24 November 2013.

²⁸ 28-year-old man from Szeged, 22 October 2008.

²⁹ "It is quite usual that press gives some kind of background information on the family of the politician, but if those efforts are regularly fed by the politician, then we should talk about an attempt to turn celebrity." Kiss 2005: 11.

³⁰ Excerpt from an interview with Viktor Orbán. *Story*, 7 August 2008, p. 8.

As a result, he has built a rustic adobe house in the country, not in a showy spot, where in his own butcher shop, he has bacon, ham, and sausage hanging. "Before we got into it, we looked around the area for days with the architect to discover the folk motifs and accommodated to that when we made the house out of adobe. I didn't want to use modern building materials if you can make an equally good – an even better – house using traditional techniques."³¹ The lifestyle choice of returning to nature that is seeing a renaissance nowadays can also express for readers that through his return to nature, being natural, and village life, we also witness his return to the life of the common man, and Orbán no longer blends into the crowd in the image of the media, but he does so in the reality of his daily life among the residents of Felcsút. He blends among the people as if he were a postmodern folk leader in disguise – although he is not actually in disguise. He lives his daily life without any media events, fuss, or hint of being special, he busies himself in the kitchen. "My fatherly authority is strengthened by scrambled eggs, in which I am unbeatable. If we all sit down together at the table, I make them with twenty eggs and slide some fatback under it. Cooking at our place is actually a family tradition. I was 13 years old when my mother taught me the basics.... I also follow my mother's example, and, when the children reach that age, I also have them try their hand at the cooker."³² These beliefs may become the personal opinions of the readers.

"See, here it is. 'Viktor Orbán wants 15-20 grandchildren.' We're in the same boat there too. And he lives in an adobe house, there it is. Something else we share!"³³

Orbán is an ordinary person, therefore; however, for his followers, he is more deeply a leader and saviour to his people. He is a multiple, heterogeneous personality, the common and great man all in one. His followers expect him to show that he knows something that no one else knows and can do something that anyone could do. The son of the people, who, by becoming the leader of the nation, is conceived as a personal hero to everyone who has come from the people, deals with the problems of the people and therefore is one of them. One manifestation of this is that his first name, Viktor, is widely used as a term of endearment. His name is shouted in chorus in a sort of cheer at public gatherings and on tours of the country,³⁴ and he is addressed this way in electronic messages, in which attachment to him is also extended to his entire family.

31 Excerpt from an interview with Viktor Orbán. *Story*, 7 August 2008, p. 6.

32 Excerpt from an interview with Viktor Orbán. *Story*, 7 August 2008, p. 7.

33 29-year-old woman from Szeged, 14 October 2008.

34 These evoke the atmosphere of sporting events in the participants since they are expecting the appearance of their own man and they are eager for him to succeed. Orbán does not leave them disappointed because "he tells it to them like it is" and the participants leave the rite feeling that they have triumphed over the – only symbolically present – opponent.

*"Dear Viktor,
I wish you and your lovely family very happy and blessed Easter holidays!
Yours, with affection and respect,
Mrs KJ"*

*"Dear Viktor,
...on behalf of my friends and the mayor, please accept my invitation to
our village day celebration on 13 September 2007, where we could talk some
at a public forum.
Go, Hungary, go
Go, VIKTOR, go"³⁵*

In addition to the media, centrally organised rites, commemorations and speeches strengthen Orbán's influence. His sudden emergence in the world of politics was due to just such a rite in 1989, and by now these events – primarily national holidays – provide a platform for the masses to come to know and then integrate into their own lives, first, his political convictions and, second, his worldview. For this it is also necessary to turn these rites from merely political events into something of a much broader spectrum, into politicized cultural events. These should be "not holy days, but holidays," where people become excited not about ideas and the victorious past, but are simply enjoying themselves.³⁶ The rites that I have examined unite both types of days in their characteristics. The mythological forms, religious characteristics, and heroic representations are in the foreground in terms of his speeches, while entertainment dominates during the performances by various singers and dance ensembles. In rites of remembrance, Orbán's speech never breaks out of the flow of the profane entertainment in its sacredness, but he departs from the profane present and leads us by baby steps closer through various stages of the rite to the sacred peak.³⁷ Examples of these include the celebration of 23 October, in which it can be observed that the heroes of our day play an outstanding role in maintaining and re-interpreting tradition. This also holds true for some of the national party events that encourage various age groups in the populace to engage in some sort of secular pilgrimage. While the event is about commemoration, people participate in it much rather because of someone who is an outstanding figure for them and is still alive. Orbán's personality generates a mass movement to a large extent, but he uses his message to lead his fans to the past and to outstanding heroes of the past, thus revitalizing and strengthening their cult. Therefore, besides guiding public morality, he also plays a significant role in re-interpreting traditions. At times like this, he re-evaluates the past in relation to the present in such a way that he also outlines the future of the community. Turns of phrase he uses in his speeches at times of such (political) rites

³⁵ <http://orbanviktor.hu/vendegkonyv.php> Access: 12 November 2008.

³⁶ Feischmidt and Brubaker 1999. <http://www.c3.hu/scripta/scripta0/replika/honlap/> Access: 18 November 2008.

³⁷ Ferenc Pataki defines the group of people participating in such events as the "devout masses" (*áhitatos tömeg*). Pataki 1998: 132-136.

are extremely significant. Besides his representations in the media, these speeches strengthen the feeling in the community that Orbán is from among them and shares a community with them, a sense which is strengthened in them by his frequently used ways of addressing them, for example "My friends in freedom" and "Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends".

An important element of my research is the fact that the connection to the heroes of the past takes place partly through the representation of our contemporary heroes. The stars' power to shape public opinion is considered when famous people living today appear on the stage at an event. These are people who are loved by the audience, many of whom are considered national heroes by the public. These people are primarily sportsmen³⁸ and musicians and actors, who have become very popular in their own field. The star politician, therefore, attracts other stars, he or she uses them and their cult so that their previous achievements, independent of politics, justify their political activities.

Viktor Orbán in folklore

Finally, let us examine the inspirational role of Orbán in various genres of folklore. His political career of over two decades is a long enough period to have a long-lasting effect on popular culture. As a result, his figure appears in various genres of (postmodern) folklore. First, I would like to survey various examples of prose tied to his person. In line with the process through which folk poetry has changed most recently, folk poetry about Orbán does not represent significant aesthetic value, but fits into what Vilmos Voigt described as early as 1972: "The anecdotes, rumours, erotic, political and other sorts of jokes and so-called true stories, accounts of personal experiences ... and other stories appear as independent genres."³⁹ This list, however, must be supplemented with election period rhymes and text and email messages. Accounts of memories connected to some of the more humorous or memorable elements of a media appearance of Orbán's or a speech given by him at a public gathering should not be explained at length since it is clear that such stories involving politicians are common after every such event. We can look at rumours in a similar vein. I must note that a significant portion of rumours about him result from the folklorization of news about him in the media, in the spreading of which missing information is significant as well as the basic human feature people share of enjoying it when they are in possession of information.⁴⁰ I need to emphasise with regard to rumours (slander and libel) that their truth value and information content often have a more powerful manipulative role and influence than truth itself.

38 Members of the legendary Hungarian football team from the 1950s, the Golden Team, who are still alive are Gyula Grosics and Jenő Buzánszky. Hungarian Olympic champions include swimmer Krisztina Egerszegi and boxer István Kovács.

39 Voigt 1972: 241.

40 It is a well-known observation in social psychology that within groups the person who is in possession of the majority of the information, that is, extra knowledge in relation to the other members of the group, becomes the central figure.

The most recent epic folklore creations, text and email messages, can be a great deal more exciting for us than rumours. These can be divided into three categories. First, there are political scare tactics regarding Orbán acquiring (and retaining) power, jokes, mobilizing campaign messages, and rhymes. The tense political situation undoubtedly favours scare tactics. Humour, however, has also been able to relieve political tension.⁴¹ People send round some of the same jokes that they tell each other in person. Various creations are characterised by powerful variability. The names in them change frequently. Moreover, they are also characterised by the simplification to the most extreme and sharp oppositions – the good and the bad here are absolutely that. In jokes, Orbán – depending on which political camp sends it – appears as a positive as well as a negative character. “Having checked with experts, László Kovács⁴² made Viktor Orbán responsible for the fall of the Roman Empire.” Some jokes related to religious themes should be emphasised in particular: “Viktor Orbán is not just religious. He is religion itself!” “Viktor Orbán didn’t go to school to study. He just wanted to check out where they would be teaching about him.” “God left the Earth to itself. He knew that he would have nothing to do next to Viktor Orbán!”

Texted jokes are characterised by a kind of tightness and formal simplicity because of the limited character count. We can conclude the same in connection with messages related to mobilization. Some of these call attention to a particular event at which Orbán also appears, while others are funny rhymes related to elections.

*“All you dopes in Budapest.
You think Gyula Horn is best,
But the countryside’s agreed
It’s no henchman that we need.
Our victory’s all the sweeter.
We’ve got Orbán as our leader.
Pass it on today.”*

*“You commies, be afraid.
Eat the cherry cakes you’ve made.⁴³
Libero libs, just own up.
Viktor’s got it sewn up.
Hun-gar-i-ans know where to be:
KOSSUTH SQUARE, THIS SATURDAY, AT 3!
Pass it on!”*

41 We witnessed an incredible increase in the number of political jokes, which was promoted by the fact that jokes were used directly in political rivalry as well. Voigt proved to be right then when he said that “although the number of political jokes decreased around and after 1989 by now (I wonder why) they have regained their daily presence” (Voigt 1998: 322). And a further increase can be expected in this regard.

42 László Kovács is a leading socialist politician.

43 This is a reference to Péter Medgyessy, the socialist prime minister. The Hungarian word *meggy*, which sounds like the first syllable of his surname, means “(sour) cherry”.

"VIKTOR ORBÁN WRITES:
WE NEED MORE FOR THE FIGHT.
WHEN NEXT WE HERE THE CALL,
IN LINE WE ALL MUST FALL!
LONG LIVE OUR HOMELAND!
PASS IT ON TO FIVE PATRIOTS."

These rhymes and political tunes are most similar to the shout-outs in the old marketplace and the advertisement copy that developed from them. Although they lack any aesthetic excellence, I must note that text messages are folklore creations in the strictest sense of the word in contrast to mass culture since they are both expressions of a community with the power to form a community. With regard to their sources, I must note that they often draw on certain works of high culture (*gesunkenes Kulturgut*), earlier works of folklore, or international material. However, independent of these, the way they are selected and transformed expresses an independent and contemporary folk culture. The variability of works of folklore, however, does not merely represent the exchange of certain personal names or changes in certain details; rather, temporal migration and variation exist as a result. In connection with the elections in 2006, some of the text messages from 2002 became topical again, and there was no significant change between the two, except that the material collected in connection with the 2002 elections is significantly richer than that from four years later.⁴⁴ Therefore, it is proved yet again that the same works can be related to different people. The works therefore are passed down in keeping with the rules of folklore.⁴⁵ Election rhymes belonging to the first group of emails are related to these latter works of mobilization; they reflect the political preferences of their creators and transmitters in broader, poetic, humorous, and, at times, vulgar forms.

*"To the polls I went,
Where some commies had been sent
To try and defeat 'em,
But FIDESZ will beat 'em.
Pack your bags, there's the street.
Here comes Viktor, there goes Pete."
"We love this land, we're here to stay.
Mark our words, we'll have our day.
In two weeks' time, there is no doubt,
We'll grab the bums and vote them out.
Long live Viktor, down with Pete.
Give him time to beat his meat!"*

44 This number decreased further by 2010.

45 In addition to a Viktor-Péter (Pete) name switch from a previous rhyme, also note the appearance of the name of former socialist prime minister Gyula Horn in the 2002 campaign and then that of former socialist PM Péter Medgyessy.

I must note that the trickling down of high culture can be observed here too since parodies of longer poems such as *Toldi* and *The Bards of Wales* by János Arany appear within the framework of email folklore in which the figure of Orbán also emerges. This material is therefore no longer a pure folklore phenomenon but a unique blend of folklore and official art, public poetry.

Ilona Nagy discovered an anecdote in connection with Orbán in the news daily *Romániai Magyar Szó*: "When he was still only chairman of his party, Viktor Orbán, prime minister of Hungary, visited Székelyudvarhely and stayed at the home of Molnos the solicitor. In the morning, he saw that the solicitor's wife was cleaning his shoes. Surprised, he asked: 'What are you doing, Miss Irénke?' 'I'm cleaning your shoes so that I could one day say: I cleaned the shoes of Hungary's prime minister!' So then he grabbed Miss Irénke's shoes and started cleaning them. Then Miss Irénke also asked: 'What are you doing?' 'I'm cleaning your shoes so that you could say one day: Hungary's prime minister cleaned my shoes'."⁴⁶

I will close this series of prose works with a tale that was borne out of the most recent political events and includes the oppositions outlined so far:

"The king with the dancing feet

Once upon a time, nothing even remotely like this ever happened. In a land far, far away, where even an ox could become a great lord and where short-tailed pigs shoved red carnations⁴⁷ away with their snouts, there was once a king whose name was Feri and he had dancing feet.⁴⁸ He loved dancing so much that he had spent all his fortune on expensive shoes, but the soles of the shoes wore out quickly. His poor people had a bleak future in store since a king with dancing feet was ruling their country. When Feri danced, he showered abuse on the country. He shouted that the country is a whore, which was awfully rude. He told off everyone in the country, the young and the old alike, thinking they would not hear it anyway. Our little saint was having such a good time. If only he could have kept the country in order. He danced away the fortune of his people so in order to keep from being butchered, he set up many thousands of lead soldiers in front of his palace. The treasury yawned with emptiness, as did his head, which he was busy scratching. And lo and behold! One gold coin glistened in the middle of the treasury, but it was not enough for him to save his country. In order to ease the great chaos, he sent for Viktor, the great wizard. He was his old rival, and he would have liked Viktor dead. 'How can we make a hundred gold coins out of one?' Viktor was the right man to ask. It was difficult to outsmart this wizard. He was nobody's fool. The king called for the wizard so that he could save the kingdom. Viktor didn't want to lose his head because he liked it to stay on his neck since there was so much knowledge there. So Viktor said the magic words very quickly: 'Dance, Feri, dance! Dance till

46 Nagy 2006: 428-429.

47 The red carnation is the symbol for the socialists.

48 This is a reference to former socialist prime minister Ferenc Gyurcsány.

*your shoes wear out!’ And so the king danced happily ever after, although
not so very happily since he could no longer steal from the treasury.*

A short tale for adults.

2 March 2009”⁴⁹

An increasing number of examples can be noted nowadays within Internet folklore to confirm the theory of technological determinism. Humorous memes dominate in which the person to be ridiculed is a character in a well-known work of high or popular culture (e.g. a painting and a film). Accordingly, Orbán appears on a banknote and a film poster for and excerpt from *The Godfather*, *The Matrix*, and the *Star Wars* films. Besides these, to a lesser extent, Orbán’s figure is also present in conventional paintings as well. Moreover, his portrait may appear cut out of a newspaper or magazine and may be displayed on the wall of a room or office or on a t-shirt in a traditional manner.

The profane cult of relics is by far not as significant and varied in association with his figure as it is, for example, in connection with stars who are singers. I must add that Orbán is a living figure and therefore objects related to him are not unique since one can practically meet him at any time. His followers, however, consider contact with him a key moment in their lives, as borne out by images taken of crowds of people gathered to shake his hand and of an elderly lady who is kissing his hand and by an email whose writer was deeply touched because he had been able to get a glimpse into Orbán’s life: “We thank you for giving us ordinary citizens a glimpse of your life and the details of your work.” His autograph can also be extremely important; indeed, people are willing to wait for hours for an autograph with Orbán’s newly published book in their hands.

It can thus be concluded that the cult of star politicians is the closest to that of historical heroes. Clearly, the similarities also stem from the fact that the political profession means that a politician must serve the interests of the community and the nation. It is much easier, therefore, for a charismatic person to emerge from this environment and become a hero since personal success is basically possible here in a way that blends with the success of the broader community as well. Direct ties with the politics of an historical heroic predecessor is also important, which the star politician continually reiterates. It was no coincidence that in 1989–’90 Orbán referred to his party a number of times as *Petőfidesz*, that his government introduced the *Széchenyi Plan*, named after the great nineteenth-century Hungarian statesman, and that it backed the making of the film *A Hídember* (*The Bridgeman*) about the same man and his achievements. Besides these, Orbán has reached back to other national heroes. In honour of Hungarian football legends, he has established the *Puskás Ferenc Football Academy* to support talented children and has also launched the *Bozsik Programme*.⁵⁰

49 The writer of the tale lives in Szeged and spread the tale by photocopy among his acquaintances. This is how I received it on 7 April 2009.

50 The name *Petőfidesz* contains a reference to the revolutionary poet Sándor Petőfi. József Bozsik was on the legendary Golden Team with football legend Ferenc Puskás, “the most famous Hungarian”.

Nowadays Orbán is clearly a star in his own political camp. At the same time, approaches to him link him more to historical heroes. His cult is ever growing. He may, of course, be pushed into the background as a result of a political turn that is unfavourable to him, but the fact that his cult has not weakened after two lost parliamentary elections – indeed, his leading position has been reinforced within his camp during this period – suggests otherwise.

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BETWEEN WEST AND EAST: THE CASE STUDY OF ĐORĐE MARJANOVIĆ. The rising cult of celebrities in Yugoslav music system

In this article we will deal with the rising cult of stars in Socialist Yugoslavia, focusing on the case study of Đorđe Marjanović, a singer who introduced an innovative approach into his shows, which – for the first time in the country – turned him into an object of collective idolatry.

From the mid-1950s the developing music system in Yugoslavia strived to gain its place into the society. The Titoist regime was not *a priori* opposing pop music and in some cases even supported it, providing the musicians with money, music contests and spaces for the concerts. Nevertheless, it tried to subdue them to its strict organizational principles. As soon as the Yugoslav establishment accepted jazz and new pop music influenced by the Western models, it created professional associations of musicians on both the Federal and the Republican level. The association was supposed to manage the booking of its members' concerts and to mediate between them and record labels. Moreover, some of the musicians were employed in radio stations or orchestras, thus having a stable job, which provided the State with another opportunity to control them. The idea of such a system was that the artist as an individual was a cultural worker, supposed to work for the collectivity, to be subjected to a cultural plan and to perceive an average fee.

This system did not take a long time to show its fallacies. Following the press, we can come across several articles criticizing the commercialization of Yugoslav pop music and the rise of few "big names", who started behaving as real stars and making huge amounts of money with their exhibitions. From the second half of the 1950s, not just in music but also in other fields (sport, cinema), few celebrities emerged and became the subjects of a cult: being very well paid, able to travel abroad and possessing items considered objects of desire by the common people (such as cars), they conflicted with the Socialist egalitarianism. Since the beginning of the 1950s one can follow the rising of a *star system*, which is hardly submitted to Socialist regulatory rules. Instead of a mass of educated artists offering a cultural product in a system regulated by the State, the new music stars, "elected" by the audiences' taste, shaped the music business with their requests. The public, which initially was simply eager to listen to a music genre, soon started to want to listen to a specific performer – providing him or her with "bargaining power". Already in the early 1960s several well-known performers were able to set their price. According to a 1962 inquiry done by the magazine *Vjesnik u srijedu*, the highest paid singers were Đorđe Marjanović, Ivo Robić and Nada Knežević, three of the most popular performers, with an average monthly income of 350 thousand dinars; they were followed by at least three colleagues with lower but comparable

revenues. To understand the proportions, one can consider that in the same year the average monthly income of an engineer working in a large State industry was about 40 thousand dinars.¹

This phenomenon became a matter of concern for the authorities. In 1960 Lola Novaković was sharply criticized because she asked for a fee of 30 thousand dinars per night for a series of ten performances held at a fashion show and, when the organizers rejected her request, she refused to perform.² In 1962 she asked for a fee of 40 thousand dinars plus plane ticket expenses and obtained just a little bit less. It was a very large amount of money, but not comparable with the huge fee asked for by Marjanović for a two-night performance – 100 thousand dinars. In the same year every event of the Yugoslav bicycle race was followed by a concert of the most established singers (Gabi Novak, Nada Knežević, Vice Vukov, Đorđe Marjanović e Lola Novaković), from which everyone received 30 thousand dinars per performance for a total of 300 thousand dinars plus travel expenses. In that year the three highest paid pop stars were Marjanović, Robić and Novaković with a monthly income of 350 thousand dinars, followed by Gabi Novak (250 thousand dinars), and Mario Novosel and Nada Knežević (200 thousand dinars). As an article published in the magazine *Vjesnik u srijedu* stressed, these fees were much higher than the ones received by opera singers, who nevertheless had to have a much longer education.³

Obviously, the fame did not mean just wealthiness but also popularity, awards and influence on the audience. For the first time in the country in the early 1960s, the signs of affection toward the performers turned into idolatry and they established themselves as models for the younger generations. The Ideological Commission, the Federal organism in charge of dealing with ideological questions, paid huge attention to phenomena connected with popular culture and devoted a session to the risks of the cult of celebrities. In particular, a functionary complained about the unrealistic expectations of the youth and their attitude towards a life marked by hedonism and good style of life rather than work and efforts:

“we are especially thinking about the propagation of the cult of stars, they may be sportspeople, who are buying and selling, actors who are living in glory and abundance, singers who won the golden records... They are all a pretentiously part of the upper classes of popular, happy and rich people. All the possible details about these stars are described to our youth, and, on the contrary, in the press which launches these cults, one cannot come to know anything about people carrying out work accomplishments, bearing up in the fight for more human relations, solving scientific assignments. Youth is provided with an image of high standards of upper societies in the

1 Zvizdić 1962; Marković 1996: 207.

2 Luković 1989: 106.

3 Zvizdić 1962.

bourgeois countries but no one describes or outlines the reality of working classes in those countries."⁴

The cult of celebrity was addressed not just to music stars but also to actors and above all to sportsmen. In this period some of them emerged as individual figures above the collectivity of their teams, becoming mass idols. Since the system was slowly moving towards the market, football players started perceiving huge amounts of money, thus embodying those material values which were usually connected with a Capitalist ideal of personal success: they were among the first ones being able to travel abroad, to buy a car and to live in abundance. The new celebrities soon became an object of worship, as happened with the Red Star football player Dragoslav Šekularac, who starred in a movie inspired by his story, *Šeki snima, pazi se* (Šeki is filming, watch yourself). The movie, in which a few big names of the music system, such as Lola Novaković e Tereza Kesovija, played a part, turned out to be a flop and was sharply criticized by the authorities for its low quality, regarded as an example of pulp. Subsequently, the director Marijan Vajda was dismissed by the Serbian association of cinema artists.⁵ One can suppose that the commercial flop of the movie was one of the main reasons for the violent attacks from the critics, because the director was guilty of a double sin: he introduced into the market a low quality cultural product but moreover, he failed to return a profit to the producers. Commercial reasons are often mentioned as an excuse for low quality pulp productions, supposed to provide studios with the money they needed to finance more artistic projects.⁶

Entertainment music enjoyed a much larger commercial space than other music genres, which depended on the market and tended to get out of hand of the authorities. According to data provided by the Association of the musicians of each Republic, the number of performances held is much larger than that of the declared performances; one can suppose that the mediation role played by the Associations was often overcome by private arrangements between the artists and the organizers. In this way they both avoided paying taxes. In the music business money was often passing from hand to hand, thanks to the mediation of make-shift managers. According to a *Vjesnik u srijedu* inquire, even "big names" were involved in such a system: some of them, touring Macedonia, received 90 thousand dinars from the hands of Dražen Bojić, "a medical student", who turned himself into a music manager. There were close relations between singers and orchestras, which often acted as enterprises, where musicians employed at radio and TV stations, earned a surplus in overtime.⁷

Although the new star system was a target of criticism from the press and the politicians, nobody ever seriously opposed it. Firstly, Yugoslav Socialist culture never tried to conflict with the entertainment power of popular culture, instead it

4 Ideološka komisija: b. 178

5 Škrabalo 1984: 199.

6 Senjković 2008: 58.

7 Zvizdić 1962.

tried to coexist with it and in some cases to cooperate – Yugoslav president, Josip Broz Tito, was used to inviting celebrities (etc. Liz Taylor and Richard Burton, Sophia Loren) to his residence. Secondly, the Yugoslav pop stars from the 1950s were no way subversive or engaged with political issues; in comparison to the other Eastern European leaderships, the Yugoslav one succeeded in defusing the subversive charge of first rock'n'roll classics. Furthermore, from the early 1960s the Yugoslav musicians started long tours in the Eastern Bloc, thus enhancing the reputation of the country as a filter between East and West.

The rise of a Yugoslav rock star

The character of Đorđe Marjanović is an emblematic example of all these issues. The story of his life, which he himself contributed in shaping through interviews and an autobiography, seems more like an American tale of “making a bid for celebrity” than the story of a guy from a Socialist country.

The young Đorđe arrived in Belgrade from the province to study but, soon after that, felt his artistic calling and made several attempts to enter into show business. In the meantime he did every kind of job to scrape a living. We already have to notice that the early years of a star's career are harsh and full of obstacles, but his obstinacy will be rewarded with a huge success. In 1954 Marjanović went for an audition to select pop music singers and, even if he did not pass, he really impressed the selectors. One of them, the jazz musician Predrag Ivanović, recalled that “At that time, here singers were used to singing standing still, they did not move. While Đorđe, I can remember, in front of us, [...] had an entire script: how to walk, how to talk to the audience. He was a real discovery. Which we had only watched in the movies, had heard about, was done by one of our guys.”⁸ As we can see, from the very beginning his image on the stage was a very important part of his performance.

Marjanović mixed a wide range of music genres from the first rock'n'roll classics to the tradition of Italian *canzone*, which was very popular in Yugoslavia, where Sanremo festival was regularly followed. His first hit came out in 1957 with the song *Zvižduk u 8* [Whistle at 8], written by Darko Kraljić, which sold about 11 thousand copies in a country where there were just 20 thousand gramophones and where records were usually distributed in 1,500 copies.⁹ In 1958, just three days after it came out at Sanremo festival, he sang Modugno's song *Nel blu dipinto di blu*.¹⁰ In the same year, in a concert for the opening of the first department store in Niš, where a few established singers performed, he was supposed to sing just one song but at the end, cheered on by the audience, ended up singing his whole repertoire and giving several encores.¹¹

8 Luković 1989: 81.

9 Janjetović 2011: 128.

10 Milutinović 1966.

11 Ivačković 2006b.

Despite the huge popularity, in 1959 Marjanović was not yet accepted by the music establishment and was not invited to the Opatija festival, the major music contest of the region, thus annoying his fans, who sent several letters to the magazines, denouncing his exclusion as an injustice.¹² In that year he served the army in Ljubljana but his popularity did not decrease at all and his album was the first one to be produced by PGP RTB, the new label of Radio Television Beograd. In 1960, fifteen days after the end of his military service, he entered the contest for the first time and won three awards with two songs, *Pesma raznosaua mleka* [Song of the “milk boy”] e *Pesma prodavca novina* [Song of the newspaper seller], referring to the jobs he did to earn his living before achieving success. Year after year Marjanović released several hits: *Lazarela*, *Milord*, *Stari frak* [Old tail coat], *O kakav mesec* [Oh, such a moon]. In 1962 he made his debut as an actor in the music comedy *Zvižduk u 8* playing himself, – another symptom of cult of celebrities. The movie was harshly criticized by the experts but won success with the public.

The deep affection of his fans was shown at the first edition of the contest *Zlatni mikrofon* [Golden microphone], when a large number of the audience left the hall, disputing the fact that their idol did not win the contest, and compelled the TV station to cut off the transmission. Later on, about 7 thousand people gathered in front of Dom Sindikata (where the festival was held), waited for him and, when he went out, they surrounded him, carrying him in their arms to Terazije, where he improvised a concert on the roof of a car. Such a scene recalls the hysteria surrounding rock’n’roll in Western countries, perceived not just as a form of art but rather as a totalizing sensory experience, whose meaning went way beyond music, and represented for younger generations a form of rebellion to the established roles. Worshiped by his fans, he was greatly criticized because of his behavior on the stage, regarded as “distasteful” and “clown-like”, a deplorable imitation of the Western models¹³ he used to jump all over the stage, take off his jacket and throw it to the public, to perform his songs with a lot of *pathos*.

Fan clubs dedicated to a singer – members of Đorđe’s fan club were called “đokisti” – for the first time spread across the country, developing practices mutated by the cult of personality. For example, they celebrated Marjanović’s birthday as a holiday, in a country where President Tito’s birthday was celebrated as a holiday devoted to Youth (Yout’s day). Moreover they were used to spending hours in front of his house waiting for him and to writing graffiti on the walls of the building where he lived.¹⁴ His fans’ accounts recall those of believers in front of a divinity, prone to religious ecstasy and uncontrolled acts:

We do try to convince ourselves that he is a normal person, a mortal, but we can’t. Maybe we are fanatics, I don’t know. For us he is – God!

¹² Marković 1996: 475.

¹³ Janjatović 2007: 141.

¹⁴ Marjanović 2001a.

It was last year when Đorđe left for a several months tour in the Soviet Union. It was raining and the tears poured down our faces. We got down on our knees on the train platform and kissed Đorđe's feet. The train could not leave and the ticket collector asked us to move. Đorđe, who was crying as well, folded his hands and asked us not to make ill-considered acts. We wanted to throw ourselves under the train. It was terrible. We didn't know what we were doing.¹⁵

These hysterical scenes during his concerts are recurring in the accounts of that time: nothing similar had ever appeared in Yugoslavia before him. Not just teenagers, but a wider audience, were conquered by his charisma. A journalist described his audience during one of his concerts in 1963: "hundreds of young mothers with children from 3 to 7, five hundred girls in mini-skirts into raptures [...], a thousand other spectators [...], and about 60 representatives of the cream of artistic and intellectual Serbian society."¹⁶

If the audience was often showing its love and affection towards him, he himself was fostering this sentimental relationship with his fans, addressing them in the concerts as old friends: "Here we are once again together, to talk as we once did, as every time we meet each other. I will tell you about my and your joys and troubles, love and tears; we will rejoice, and cry if we will feel like doing so."¹⁷

We can notice that Marjanović, that in the first years of his career was regarded as a subversive phenomenon because of his way of acting on the stage and because he had introduced into the country new music genres from the decadent West, in 1963 was already established as a celebrity on a mainstream level: he held up to ten concerts consecutively to meet his fans' requests and, allegedly, even Jovanka Broz, Tito's wife, openly expressed her support.¹⁸ As time went by he started being perceived more and more as a symbol of an old fashion way of performing, marking a distance between him and the youngsters. In 1963 he performed in a concert in Tašmajdan park in Belgrade, together with Alasi, Safiri and Crveni Koralj from Zagreb, and was whistled by the audience, who most likely perceived him as being distant from the other performers and from the music genre they wanted to listen to.¹⁹

Marjanovic kept dividing music critics and audience. Some of them were accusing him of lacking a true singing talent, some others replied that, since he introduced a new style in Yugoslav pop music, he could not be judged according to the traditional parameters. It was clear to his contemporaries that in his career, his image – recalling an idea of Western modernity – played a very important role, pushing his talent into the background. It is not by chance that he started having singing lessons after having achieved a huge popularity. The fact that his success was perceived as being more connected with his image than with his talent was also perceived by his contemporaries:

15 Luković 1989: 80.

16 Kosier 1963.

17 Aleksijević 1967.

18 Ivačković 2006a.

19 Žikić 1999: 30-31.

*"We think that Đorđe Marjanović has solid music qualities. But we do not assert that he is our best singer. His merit lies in the fact that he – is a singer for the audience. Mastership in establishing contacts, charm, lack of impertinence, nonchalantness and a feeling to interpret make the audience love him. He does not even sing a song in a repetitive or artificial way. He lives with every song. This is also normal. Marjanović himself writes words for the majority of songs he performs. Accordingly, it is not strange that this pale and sensitive young man, who looks much younger than he is [...], is so acclaimed by the audience. Because he is not just singing thanks to his voice, he makes the songs come alive and feels them."*²⁰

Refreshed by another hit in 1968, *Romana*, Marjanović's career continued into the late 1960s and the 1970s. In 1968, during the traveling music contest *Pjesma ljeta* [Summer's song], a dispute occurred on a topic that can be regarded as a sign of the renewed tensions over the national question in Yugoslavia. The Croatian singer Vice Vukov, which according to the forecasts, was together with Marjanović one of the possible winners, asserted that the outcome of the contest, which on that occasion was held in Tučevi, a Dalmatian resort which was home to a resting place for members of the Army, was fixed by the officers of the Yugoslav Army which were on the coast on holiday with their families and went to vote to support the Serbian candidate. Other meaningful polemics were aroused, for example discussing whether Cyrillic or Latin alphabet should be used to write the names of the participants on the badges. An action was brought against Vukov, accused of having injured the Serbian people, and he started to get involved in political-national issues and to have problems with justice, which culminated into his ban as an exponent of Maspok.²¹ In 1972 Marjanović went to the Split festival for the last time and was whistled. In the early 1990s he complained that the music system was splitting along national lines and he was not well accepted anymore in some parts of the country, as in Zagreb and Split.²² He stressed his identity as a Yugoslav, but, without being active in politics, took his side, the Serbian one, unlike other musicians who kept a pro-Yugoslav artistic engagement.

Yugoslav pop stars as filters between East and West

Since the 1950s, in order to spread a more modern image of Yugoslavia, the Federal Commission for Foreign Cultural Relations had decided to send not just classical musicians and folklore ensembles abroad, but also jazz and pop

²⁰ Milutinović 1966.

²¹ Cvitić 2006; Luković 1989: 88; 90-91. Maspok, acronym of *Masovni pokret* (Mass movement), which came out in 1968 in Croatia as a liberal and democratic movement demanding more reforms and autonomy to the Croatian Republic but, as time went by, acquired more and more nationalist nuances.

²² Luković 1989: 90.

performers.²³ Some musicians toured Western Europe, arousing the audience's curiosity because of their provenance from a Socialist country.²⁴ In 1959 Ivo Robić made a success with the song *Morgen*, which was recorded in an Italian and English version and produced by the German label Polydor, opening the door for long tours in the United States and in Europe. Karlo Metikoš went back in Yugoslavia after a huge success in France and an attempt to record an album in Italy, presented himself with the stage name of Matt Collins and exploited the aroma of Western glamour that could be perceived in his performances and style. In 1964 Lola Novaković got the first prize at the Italian music contest *Roma canta*, winning over other renowned participants.²⁵

Robić, Metikoš and Novaković were some of the few exceptions to the rule according to which trends were traveling from the West to the East and not the other way around. Despite a few positive examples, to which the press devoted a huge amount of attention, the attempts to export Yugoslav music in the West, both through tours and festivals, proved to be a failure. The only partial exceptions were Northern European countries where Yugoslav migrant workers communities were developing very fast. Already in the mid-1960s it was clear to Branislav Kupusinac, vice editor in chief of the music magazine *Ritam*, that Yugoslav artists in Western countries, being far from acting as cultural ambassadors of their Socialist homeland, were:

"cheaper labor force in the coffee-houses market in Western Germany and in the rest of the West, another serious and unpleasant stain.

In Yugoslavia it is a shame if an established name makes an appearance in a bar, even in one of the most prominent.

When they go abroad, then a descent in a bar is called being a guest star or touring.

*[...] In the meantime they collect some money. Some clothes. Some better acoustics. And a second hand car [...]. And when they are back in the country, we call it all in capital letters: tour."*²⁶

From the beginning it was evident that the East offered better opportunities. Yugoslav artists made long tours in the Eastern bloc and played the role of a filter spreading new trends and styles coming from the West. In the early 1960s the first pioneer tours of Yugoslav artists – Radmila Karaklajić, Lola Novaković, the band Indeksi – in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe opened the door of Eastern markets, which became more and more attractive at the end of that decade, when several Yugoslav artists – Đorđe Marjanović, Ivica Šerfeza, Ljupska Dimitrovska – built their careers on their own popularity behind the Iron Curtain. Their activity was carefully observed by the Soviet authorities, a matter that sometimes led to

23 Vuletic 2008: 871.

24 Misirlić 2008: 36.

25 Misirlić 2008: 82, 85.

26 Kupusinac 1964.

trouble. As Kornelije Kovač, former member of the band Indeks, remembered, after their first concert in Moscow the band was approached by an official of the Ministry of Culture who intimated them to play music “from the brother peoples of Yugoslavia”, instead of British and United States songs. After a few days, the band, asked by the audience²⁷, performed a song from the corrupted West. Apparently, nothing happened but, at the end of the tour, the Soviet authorities communicated to them that there was no more space for them in Soviet Union.²⁸

In 1965 *Ritam* tried to inquire the popularity and the perception of Yugoslav pop music abroad. Since 1952 23 Yugoslav pop singers and more than 40 musicians and bands had performed abroad and 24 international tours had been organized. Since 1961 Yugoslavia had participated in the Eurovision contest and few Yugoslav artists recorded for foreign labels, including Ivo Robić, who won the golden record with the label Polydor. Nevertheless, all these efforts seemed not to have achieved significant results in spreading Yugoslav music in the West: several European big names, when asked by the interviewer, said they did not know any Yugoslav artist even if they all had visited Yugoslavia. One of the most interesting element of this small inquiry about entertainment music are the quotes from the foreign – both Western and Eastern – press, which often stress they lack of originality as well as the preponderance of Italian influence over the Yugoslav performers. According to a Soviet newspaper, Đorđe Marjanović appeared as “a follower of the Italian way of singing”. The French *Figaro* appreciated Arsen Dedić’s performance, but it wrote that “even the Yugoslavs stand in the background of the Italian imitator of United States singers and they do not have singers with original energy and independent spirit”. The same opinion was shared by *Frankfurter Rundschau*, according to which the Yugoslavs were explicit copies of the Italian *canzone*” (B.B. 1965). These quotes offer a clear picture of the chain of influences that brought new music trends from Western to Eastern countries through the filters of Italy and Yugoslavia.

Even if he was one of the first artists able to provoke a strong emotional reaction in the audience, which is deeply connected with the phenomenon of rock stars’ idolatry in the Capitalist world, Marjanović went along with his career thanks to Russia and Eastern countries. In 1963 he was chosen for a tour of Yugoslav musicians in the Soviet Union and performed in the Lenin stadium fifteen consecutive times in front of 15 thousand people. Yugoslav establishment proved itself as being able to deeply understand the rules of celebrity diplomacy, fostering Belgrade’s soft power. At that time Soviet rock scene had already known the Beatles through bootleg records but the only bands enjoying the State support (which was necessary to play in big venues and to find a label) were bland versions of rock and roll, created to neutralize any subversive message. The most

27 “During the breaks, the kids were screaming out the names of foreign bands – the Beatles, the Rolling Stones – to show us that they knew something about rock’n’roll.” Luković 1989: 225.

28 Luković 1989: 224.

genuine attempts to create a local rock culture, when not openly opposed, were neglected by official media and deprived of any opportunity to record their music.²⁹

Đorđe Marjanović became a big star in the Soviet Union where he performed around 30 times in his life and brought a new sound and a style, which was clearly a copy of the Western ones, in the Eastern countries in which not all the cultural products from the West were allowed to enter. Some of his concerts became legendary, as the one in Yerevan, where he allegedly performed in front of 85 thousand people at the local football stadium. His tours were organized by the Soviet concert State agency which depended from the Ministry of Culture and in the first country of socialism he got to know politicians and authorities.

Marjanović was used to performing a repertoire balancing Italian and French songs – usually perceived as harmless, deprived of their subversive meaning – with some of the new sounds which were developing into rock'n'roll – such as the Beatles. The songs were usually translated in Russian to be easily understandable. Being considered an antidote to the rock'n'roll epidemic coming from the West, the Serbian singer was thus allowed to fight with Western competitors on the same ground. On the other hand, the audience filled up concert halls to listen to him not just because of his talent but mostly because it was the only opportunity for them to listen to this kind of music on a mainstream level, in big stadiums. Moreover, he was from Yugoslavia, a Slavic country which was perceived as being halfway between East and West.

His specificity did not pass unnoticed in international press. In 1963, during his first Eastern tour, *Kijevska pravda* wrote that:

*"The Yugoslav artists thrilled us. The sincerity with which they sing showed us that they respect their audience and they are not posing as other foreign singers. Even if in our country nobody sings in the way Đorđe Marjanović showed us, the audience, immediately conquered by his sincerity, let out its enthusiasm. Marjanović has an extraordinary singing talent, but an ingenuous talent, charming for his listeners. Although some people think that his gestures are Italian, his spontaneity makes him similar to French. But the most important thing is that this is not a pose, but just a part of the whole caliber of a first-class singer such as Marjanovic."*³⁰

Marjanović did not fail to draw the attention of the Western observers, like the United States magazine *Newsweek* or the Italian newspaper *La Stampa*, who were impressed by his popularity in the East. The *La Stampa* correspondent in Russia offered a portrait of him during his 1969 triumphant tour:

"A beat repertoire, a glass »like Adriano Celentano«, hippy haircut and appearance – this is the Yugoslav Đorđe Marjanović, an idol for the Soviet youth. His concerts in Moscow are not different from Hallyday's

29 Ramet 1994: 178-218; Ryback 1990; Troitsky 1987.

30 Luković 1989: 85.

performances in Paris, »Rolling Stones« in London, or Bob Dylan's in New York. The same rhythm, the same songs, the same »message«, the excitement of the audience, final scenes of collective hysteria. On December 14, 1969, he sang at »Estrada« in Moscow. It was a sad and rainy night, but the hall re-echoed with the noise. The audience sitting inside was mostly made up of women – teenagers between 14 and 18, but even several women older than fifty (likely to take care of the youngsters, isn't it?), and a few shabby lads. Marjanović was screaming out and the audience was answering. At the end the teenagers rushed to try to touch their idol. The concert has been taped for one hour and a half by the color television, but who knows they will have to argue with the censors, especially because of those teenagers.”³¹

Marjanović's first Russian fan club was founded in 1967 and since then Soviet and Yugoslav dokisti started corresponding and paying visits to each other.³² Nevertheless, as time went by, he sharply criticized the waves of Yugoslav artists who started touring the Soviet Union from the 70s, blaming them for the low quality of their performances. In that period he kept participating in Yugoslav festivals and performing in big concerts held in Dom Sindikata, but in his interviews he showed his bitterness more and more toward Yugoslav music system. He complained of not being understood by the critics and ignored by TV programs, where „I hear stories [...] about who and how much money you have to give if you want to get a program.”³³

Paradoxically – but not too much – Marjanović's intermediary role between the two blocs was recognized by the Soviets, who in 1968 elected him as a honorary member of Komsomol (the Communist Union of Youth) and awarded him for his contribution to the enhancement of friendship between the Soviet and the Yugoslav youth. During his career he was awarded several times, once again in Russia by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1990³⁴ and even in Belarus in 1996. In his website he presents himself as the perfect prototype of a Socialist rock star, active between Yugoslavia and – more and more – the Eastern countries. Even today he points out he is an enthusiastic lover of Soviet Union: “I am part of that generation which was educated and grew up with Russian classic literature, I am a lover of Russian culture. I have always carefully followed what was going on in the first country of socialism”.³⁵ His devotion to Russia marked a turning point even in his private life: in the mid-1960s he divorced his first wife Zlata to marry a Russian girl. Their love story and married life was generously offered to the tabloid covers, as a model of happy family.

31 Luković 1989: 85-86.

32 Marjanović 2001a.

33 Kovač 1983.

34 According to Gorbachev's message Marjanović was awarded for his contribute to a better understanding and cooperation between people and to the advancement of cultural relations between USSR and SFRY. Prelević 1990.

35 <http://www.djordjemarjanovic.com/>, accessed Saturday 25, 2012.

His relation with Russia is shown also on an institutional level: he is a regular guest of *Ruski dom* [Russian house] – the Russian cultural center – in Belgrade, where he celebrated his 75th birthday. In 1997 he and some of his colleagues, who were regular guest stars in the Soviet Union in the 1970s, performed for the 850th anniversary of Moscow. In 2005 they celebrated the Day of Victory in the Second World War in Moscow with a big concert.³⁶ Throughout the years he has received several awards for the improvement of the relations between Serbia and Russia. Even if he was originally awarded for his contribution to the rapprochement of the two Socialist countries, in a changed context this idea was soon turned into support for a kind of “Slavic brotherhood”, which still has many supporters in Serbia.

Marjanović, who suffered a stroke on the stage in Melbourne twenty years ago, slowly recovered but is still performing in special occasions, even if singing in playback as a result of the consequences of the illness on his voice. Anyway, this does not disturb his fans but probably even increased his popularity, because it reminds the public that he did not save himself – singing on the stage until his body gave way. Sacrificing himself for his people is one of the trademarks of national heroes, a category in which he can be somehow included. A nostalgic approach toward the unitary Socialist past is very common in Serbian older generations. Nevertheless, the dominant anti-Communist narrative prevents them of expressing this feeling through a political lens. Marjanović and other pop icons, thus, can help in finding a way to commemorate a non-controversial past, in which the majority of people were living much better than now. Besides the theme of sacrifice, Marjanović possesses at least two other distinguishing features characterizing national heroes.³⁷ Firstly, he came from the “people”, a feature which is often used to explain his emotional way of performing and his initial lack of singing skills (he did not receive a musical education). As he was used to declaring, “I didn’t have any model. I sang and I sing as I feel it, as I can.”³⁸ Secondly, he was engaged in an activity which is strongly connected with the enhancement of his country: touring the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, he contributed in developing a liberal and fascinating image of Yugoslavia, a country which, according to its international position, could act as a bridge between East and West.

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MARKO PERKOVIĆ THOMPSON. National hero or Croatia's troublemaker?

Introduction

In this case study Marko Perković Thompson's career is analyzed, using different sources like Croatian and foreign daily and weekly paper texts published on Internet and data from other Internet sources dedicated strictly to M. P. Thompson.¹ Also, audio and video materials were examined, paying special attention to song lyrics and main aspects of his music style.

Thompson's Biography and Particular Aspects of his Public Appearance

M. P. Thompson is a Croatian musician and singer.² He was born on October 27th 1966 in the village of Čavoglave³ in Dalmatian hinterland (Šibensko-Kninska County), as a son of a mother Marije and father Ante. His early childhood and formative years he spent in his native village. He rarely saw his father who – as a great number of Croats in that time – worked in West Germany, and came home for Christmas and Easter and for other great holidays for shorter vacation. M. P. Thompson finished secondary catering school in the city of Split.

In 1991, Croatia declared independence from Yugoslavia and soon the Croatian War for Independence started, caused by Yugoslav People's Army and Serbian aggression. Thompson joined the Croatian National Guard from the very beginning of the war. He was given an American gun Thompson, popular in WW II, which became his nickname.

1 Main Internet sources used in writing the paper are as follows:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marko_Perkovi%C4%87, accessed June 14, 2011.

[http://hr.metapedia.org/wiki/Thompson_\(M._Perkovi%C4%87\)](http://hr.metapedia.org/wiki/Thompson_(M._Perkovi%C4%87)), Accessed June 14, 2011.

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<http://www.youtube.com/topic/v8lrdqEnev4/marko-perkovi>, Accessed June 17, 2011.

2 M. P. Thompson has written many songs for other singers, such as Mate Bulić. He has also sung in duets with Miroslav Škoro, Tiho Orlić, and Jasmin. Stavros. Marko Perković Thompson's official Web site: <http://www.thompson.hr/>, accessed June 14, 2011.

3 Čavoglave is part of the Ružić municipality of Šibenik-Knin County. Although very small (according to the 2001 census, it has only 199 inhabitants), it is widely known by Croats through the 1991 popular song "Bojna Čavoglave" (Čavoglave Battalion).

It was during the time while he was defending his village, that Thompson was inspired to write the song named "Bojna Čavoglave" (Čavoglave Battalion), which launched his music career.⁴ It became a very popular patriotic song from the Croatian War of Independence, celebrating the impromptu militia raised in the village to defend against attacks by the Yugoslav People's Army and local Serbs militia.⁵

In the mid-1990's he was in a relationship with popular Croatian singer Danijela Martinović and they got married in Catholic Church. After their separation, M. Perković Thompson sought a Church annulment, which was granted by the Ecclesiastical Court in Split in 2005. Subsequently he was able to join in church marriage with his wife Sandra, a Croatian-Canadian he had met during his concert in Canada.⁶ In 1995 he returned to the Croatian Army and joined the 142nd Drniš Brigade, and became one of the first soldiers to enter the captured cities of Drniš and Knin during great military liberation named "Oluja" (Operation Storm).

Thompson is a declared Roman Catholic and a hard-line right-wing political supporter, although not affiliated to any specific party. It is important to emphasize that Thompson's songs are often marked with Christian and historic themes, and include folklore elements. His motto is that he sings about God, Family and Homeland. On his concerts he gives great support for Croatians soldiers, generals or politicians sentences for war crimes during the Homeland War, especially those who were or still are being preceded in the *International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in Hague (ICTY)*.

The biggest concentrations of his fan base is the rural Croatian and Bosnia and Herzegovina⁷ hinterland, but also in other areas affected by the recent war, as well as fans living in urban areas with origins from those areas.

He has caused much controversy on the basis of the accusation of performing live the song "Jasenovac i Gradiška Stara", which openly glorifies genocide against the Serbs in WW II. Namely, Jasenovac and Stara Gradiška are two the best known Croatian concentration camps where Croatian Ustasha soldiers tortured and killed thousands of Serbs, Jews, Gypsies, Croats antifascists opponents of Ustashe regime, homosexuals and others. Serbian Orthodox population suffered greatest sacrifice. They were deported from the whole territory of then Independent State of Croatia (Nezavisna država Hrvatska or NDH), especially from the parts where Serbs were in relative or absolute majority.⁸

4 Link for the song "Bojna Čavoglave": <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S7oHHIfh-WM&feature=related>, accessed: June 16, 2011.

5 First single "Bojna Čavoglave", which proclaims the Croatian resistance to Yugoslavia and was included in the compilation album "Rock za Hrvatsku" (Rock for Croatia).

6 Together they have five children: Petar, Ante, Diva Maria, and the twins Katarina and Cvita (children were given the names from Catholic and Croatian tradition and history).

7 Here we have in mind the Western Herzegovina (part of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina) which is situated alongside Croatian borderline. In some local districts of this region (Posušje, Široki Brijeg, Ljubuški, Grude i Čitluk) more than 90% of all inhabitants are Croats.

8 Independent state of Croatia then consisted of Croatia (excluding Istria and Dalmatia) and today's Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Despite all controversies in June, 2008 he was named as the third most influential person in Croatian show business. Beside activities related to show business, Thompson built a "Church of Croatian Martyrs" there at his own expense, to be dedicated to fallen Croatian soldiers and to the civilian victims of the war. For that reason every year he organizes a fund raising concert in honor of "Victory and Homeland Thanksgiving Day", which takes place in Čavoglave. Although the village is not usually a tourist destination, tens of thousands of spectators visit the concert every year. For some time the number of attendees grows, so the famous concert in Čavoglave become special event which bring together Croats from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as from the West Europe where numerous Croatia Diaspora lives. From the socio-cultural and politological standpoint, the fact is that attendees belong to younger and middle age (from 17 to 50 years of age), lacking a broad education (most of them have secondary or craftsman school), which accept right wing or radical right wing political orientation.

The "Simon Wiesenthal Centre" has filed complaints to Croatia's state television channel regarding its broadcast of a singer accused of expressing nostalgia for the Ustashe, Croatia's pro-Nazi ruling party during World War II, although Thompson denies any connection with that period in history.⁹ The previously mentioned song "Bojna Čavoglave" was composed at the time of hardest part of the Serbian aggression on Croatia (when the "tide" was on the Serb side) as a memory to successful defense in battle of the village Čavoglave, against much better equipped and armed Serb-led Yugoslav People's Army and rebel Croatian Serb paramilitary forces. As we said before, Thompson himself was engaged in that battle, and the song appeared there, on the battlefield.

After the parliamentary elections in Croatia in 2000, a left-wing government was formed, led by the president of the Social Democratic Party Iвица Račan. He was last secretary-general of the League of Communists of Croatia before Yugoslavia break down. After democratic changes in 1990's he becomes a prominent leader in Croatia's fight for independence. Despite this fact, mentioned political changes in Croatia in 2000 sparked angry reactions among Croatian nationalists and Thompson once again gained popularity. During his concerts he often made obscene remarks on the Croatian Prime Minister I. Račan, and the President of the Republic, Stjepan Mesić.

Many of Thompson's songs have become major hits in Croatia, and are played at soccer games and other large public events. The band has won the Croatian music competitions "Melodije Mostara" (Melodies of Mostar) in 2001, and the "Croatian Radio Festival" in 2006, and has performed annually on "Victory and Homeland Thanksgiving Day", with all benefits going to families of Croatian soldiers.

⁹ He owns a share in the radio station "Narodni radio" (People's Radio) the most successful Croatian private radio station, notable for airing exclusively Croatian songs. Because of that he was able to counteract the ban of his songs on the state-owned radio stations. His concert in Zagreb's "Maksimir stadium" was aired live on state owned "HRT plus" (Croatian Radio and Television Plus Channel) and few days after also on the main national TV channel (Croatian Television Channel 1).

He has performed two large concerts in Croatia. One was held at the "Poljud stadium" in the city of Split, on September 15, 2002 with about 45,000 people. The other was held at the "Maksimir stadium" in the capital city of Zagreb on June 17, 2007 for 60,000 people. Following this June 2007 concert, the Croatian government released a statement decrying the use of Ustashe symbols. He has also performed for Croatian Diaspora in Germany, Australia, Sweden, Canada and the USA.

Music activity. Albums and Tours

After the release of "E, Moj Narode" (Oh my People) album in 2002, Thompson began touring to promote it. The height of his tour was a concert at the "Poljud stadium" in Split. The concert was attended by 40,000 spectators. During the song "Lijepa li si" (How nice you are), four popular Croatian singers joined him on stage.¹⁰ At the concert, Thompson again repeated that his songs mark three loves: God, homeland, and family. The concert sparked many controversies at the time. Two seats in the audience were reserved for general Mirko Norac (convicted war criminal, at the time on trial in Croatia) and general Ante Gotovina (as of 2009 in custody of ICTY, at the time fugitive from ICTY). At the beginning of the concert, just moments before Thompson stepped on the stage, the audience sang the Ustashe song "Evo zore, evo dana" (Here is the Dawn, Here is the Day).

In 2003, Thompson released a "Sve najbolje" (Best-of) CD,¹¹ and tour "Oh, My People" continued sporadically into 2005. Internationally, he played at Sydney and Melbourne in May 2005. By the end of the tour, the album was declared a Diamond Record after more than 60,000 copies were sold.

Album "Bilo jednom u Hrvatskoj" (Once Upon a Time in Croatia) was released in December 2006. Despite the late release, it became the second-highest selling Croatian album of the year. Soon after, Thompson announced an initial tour of Croatia and select European cities beginning after the Lenten season through to the summer, and culminating with a performance at "Maksimir stadium" in Zagreb, capital of Croatia. The tour began in Vukovar (in the Borovo Naselje neighborhood) where approximately 4000 fans came out to watch the group perform. The tour continued to Frankfurt (Germany), where he performed for a crowd of approximately 15,000 at "Ballsporthalle". In the adjacent hall, Bob Dylan performed with an audience of about 2,000 people. When he heard that Thompson had an audience of 15,000 people he asked to be taken to the concert. After that he said that he liked the music. By June, the album had sold 100,000 copies - very high by Croatian standards.

The first tour leg in Croatia ended with the biggest concert at "Maksimir stadium" in Zagreb, where they performed in front of 60,000 spectators. The concert

10 The mentioned singers were Miroslav Škoro, Alen Vitasović, Mate Bulić, Giuliano, and Mladen Grdović.

11 In 2004, the band's vocalist and bassist T. Orlić released a solo album "Tiho", which contained a couple of Thompson songs.

was broadcast live on Croatian Public Television. As part of the second leg, Thompson performed at Split's stadion "Stari plac" in front of 25,000 people.¹²

He had two shows scheduled in November 2007 for New York City, which provoked protests from several Jewish groups. These lobby groups called on the Archdiocese of New York to stop the show, but this failed as the diocese found no evidence that the group promotes Nazism. A "Washington Post" reporter who attended one of the concerts was also not convinced of the alleged Neo-Nazi link. Thompson's concert in the Toronto area attracted 5000 people to the Croatian center where it was held, and the rest of the tour continued as planned.

Thompson returned to Croatia in November 2007, and continued with shows in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Mostar, Tomislavgrad, Novi Travnik, Široki Brijeg, and Čapljina (these are places where many Croats live). His last show in Croatia before heading to Australia was annual Christmas benefit show at "Dražen Petrović Basketball Hall" in Zagreb with proceeds going to the Zagreb Cathedral.

The tour in Australia included shows at Melbourne, Sydney on New Year's Eve, Adelaide, and Perth. The B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation Commission of Australia lobbied to prevent the band from receiving Australian visas, but this failed as government officials found that the band did not violate any Australian legislation (Australian tour collectively drew in 22,000 fans at four mentioned shows).

In the new year the tour continued with shows in several Croatian towns (Rijeka, Krapina, and Čakovec) before pausing for the group's usual Lenten break. After the break the group had show in Zadar and in Gothenburg, Sweden. A show in Croatian town of Nova Gradiška had all proceeds go to the building of a local Catholic church.

Local authorities threatened to block the band's May 21 concert in Stuttgart, Germany. However, they backed down after the concert's German Croat backers threatened legal action against the city and translated twenty of the band's songs into German for the authorities' benefit.

Thompson was asked by Croatian veteran groups to perform at the "Defender's Day" celebrations at Zagreb's Ban Jelačić square, the concert being free of charge. An 55-60,000 people attended the concert by the official police estimates, some figures placing the number at 100,000. In 2008, in celebration of "Victory Day" in village of Čavoglave, Thompson drew a crowd between 60,000 and 100,000.¹³ On May 30, 2008, Thompson held another concert on Ban Jelačić square. It is estimated 130,000-160,000 people were at that concert, despite rain. The tour "Bilo jednom u Hrvatskoj" (Once Upon a Time in Croatia) officially ended on December 28, 2008, in the same Borovo Naselje venue in which it started, with another humanitarian concert with profits going to the Vukovar City hospital. It was attended by hospital's director and war-time heroine doctor Vesna Bosanac, who greeted him on stage.

¹² The show in Split was recorded for a live CD release.

¹³ Guests included former Croatian international soccer players Ardian Kozniku and Ivica Morinar, and famous international basketball player Dino Rađa.

It was estimated by Thompson's staff that almost 950,000 tickets were sold during the whole two-year long tour. In June 2008, Marko Perković was named the third most influential person in Croatian show business by "Globus", most popular Croatian weekly magazine.

What is Thompsons' Music Style?

In my opinion Thompson musical expression is the closest to folk rock, so I will take a note about this musical genre which combining elements of folk and rock music. In its earliest and narrowest sense, the term referred to a genre that arose in the United States and the UK around the mid-1960s. The genre was pioneered by the Los Angeles band The Byrds, who began playing traditional folk music and Bob Dylan-penned material with rock instrumentation, in a style heavily influenced by The Beatles. The term folk rock was itself first coined by the U.S. music press to describe The Byrds' music in June 1965, the same month that the band's debut record ("Mr. Tambourine Man") was issued. The release of The Byrds' cover version of Dylan's "Mr. Tambourine Man" and its subsequent commercial success initiated the folk rock explosion of the mid-1960s.¹⁴ The genre had its antecedents in the American folk music revival, the beat music of The Beatles and other British Invasion bands, and the folk-influenced The Animals' hit recording of the folk song "The House of the Rising Sun".

In a broader sense, folk rock includes later similarly-inspired musical genres and movements in the English-speaking world and, to a lesser extent, elsewhere in Europe. As with any genre, the borders are difficult to define. Folk rock may lean more toward folk or toward rock in its instrumentation, its playing and vocal style, or its choice of material; while the original genre draws on music of Europe and North America, there is no clear delineation of which folk cultures music might be included as influences.¹⁵

Consequently folk rock developed not only in Anglo-Saxon environment but also in the other parts of Europe. In the second part of 1970-ies and the beginning of the 1980-ies some rock bands from ex-Yugoslavia played music very close to folk rock. Here the most outstanding band is "Bijelo dugme" (White Button) from Sarajevo, with their first album of the same name, which gained enormous popularity. Famous rock critic from Zagreb Dražen Vrdoljak called music of "Bijelo dugme" "... the shepherd's rock". In my opinion specific sound and songs of Yugoslav shepherd's rock can be considered as important contribution to folk rock as its specific music style. There is no doubt that above described tradition influenced Thompson's music.

¹⁴ Dylan himself was also influential on the genre, particularly his recordings with an electric rock band on the "Bringing It All Back Home", "Highway 61 Revisited", and "Blonde on Blonde" albums. Dylan's July 25, 1965 appearance at the Newport Folk Festival with an electric backing band is also considered a pivotal moment in the development of folk rock.

¹⁵ Folk rock, URL: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Folk_rock, accessed July 16, 2011.

No matter do we speak about ballads or more lively songs, Thompson is the closest to folk and shepherds rock although we can see the influence of hard and heavy metal rock. Arguments in favor of this are the lyrics of his songs and the fact that Croatian folk elements, especially those from Thompson's homeland, are firmly weaved. And finally, his band is typical rock band consists of guitar, bass guitar, keyboard, and drums with back vocals.

We can conclude that Thompson's music style is closest to folk rock and the difference from the rock mainstream is specific value and world-view frame from which his music arises.

Thompson's lyrics and themes

Thompson's songs are often marked with Christian and historic themes, and often include folklore elements. His own claim to sing about three big loves, God, family, and homeland, is not simply a self-defense or political statement. A lot of his most successful (and most appreciated by critics) songs deal with religion: "Radost s Visina" (Joy from Above), "Dan dolazi" (The day is coming), and "Početak" (In Principium) or his own family and birthplace: "Vjetar s Dinare" (Winds from Dinara Mountain), "Sine Moj" (Oh, my Son), and "Moj Dida i Ja" (My Grandfather and I).

Thompson also composed the anthem of the right-wing Croatian Party of Rights (Hrvatska stranka prava). As we mentioned before Thompson's popular song about Croatia and their natural beauties "Lijepa li si" (How nice you are) was recorded with popular singers M. Škoro, M. Bulić, Giulliano, M. Grdović, and A. Vitasović. As time went by, those contacts led to the forming of a more defined group of singers and performers, first known as the "Tri kuma" (The Three Godfathers): Thompson himself, M. Škoro, and M. Bulić, who were the Godfathers of his first-born Šimun Petar, and now popularly referred to as the "Narodni" (Patriots). The group is not a fixed one; instead it's an ever-growing large and loose one, enlisting a great number of famous Croatian performers of different musical tendencies (from folk to rock to rap), the patriotic and rightist political tendencies and the opposition to cosmopolitan, globalized, MTV-style music seemingly being the only pre-requisite. That group, thanks to the great popularity of its associates and the media it controls or influences (the very popular People's Radio, the Croatian Music TV Channel, and especially the largest Croatian discography label "Croatia Records"), had great influence in contemporary Croatian popular music and ultimately seems to have achieved its main cultural goal: winning over the opposite "urbanized" easy-listening tendencies also in the younger parts of the audience.

Thompson has said that he is personally a fan of Night Wish, Iron Maiden, AC/DC, and Dream Theater, among other bands. He recorded hard rock (beside folk rock) similar to these bands for the first time on the album "Bilo jednom u Hrvatskoj" (Once Upon a Time in Croatia), considered by some to be a rock opera.

A Washington Post writer D. Segal described the New York stop on the "Bilo jednom u Hrvatskoj" tour as sounding "... like Iron Maiden doing Eastern European folk".¹⁶

Thompsons' Humanitarian Work and Other Public Activities

Here we are going to take a look at two aspects of Thompson's activity in public life in Croatia – humanitarian work and connection with soccer. Thompson's connection with Croatian national soccer team, which is one of successful Croatian brands and strong cohesive factor in Croatian society, is clearly visible.

The Thompson's band has held numerous humanitarian concerts, in most cases intended to various medical treatments, acquisition of medical equipment,¹⁷ building of sacral objects and helping the victims of Homeland war and various accidents. For example, after the island Kornati firefighter tragedy of the summer of 2007, Thompson participated in the recording of a memorial song "Ovo nije kraj" (This is not the end), as well as a charity soccer match for the same cause at Split's "Poljud stadium" attended by 30,000 people.¹⁸

Thompson's hit song "Lijepa li si" (How beautiful you are) is traditionally played after and at halftime at all matches of the Croatian national soccer team at Zagreb's "Maksimir stadium". The tradition came from the fact that "Lijepa li si" was widely recognized by Croatian audiences as a true 21st century re-enactment of "Lijepa naša domovino" (Oh, Our Beautiful Homeland), the Croatian Anthem.

Connected with this song was an accident that happened in 2007 when, during a match against Israel, the song was not played. After the match popular Croatian players Josip Šimunić and Dario Srna voiced their concerns about the song not being played. Former Croatian international and longtime member of the Israeli league Dovani Roso went on to say that the song did not bother anyone at the Israel Football Association. Later, Croatian coach Slaven Bilić also came to Thompson's defense. The controversy was apparently put to rest when the national team began singing the song themselves along with the Croatian fans after their 3-2 win over England at Wembley Stadium.

16 Rocking The Boat, 2007 Washington Post, November 5, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/11/04/AR2007110401620.html?ST=1>, accessed September 19, 2011.

17 In November 2008, Thompson appeared at a humanitarian concert in Zagreb with proceeds going to the "Ana Rukavina Foundation", which works to establish a bone marrow network in Croatia.

18 On August 30, 2007 a fire broke out on the island of Kornat, part of the Kornati National park. A team of 23 firemen was sent on what they thought would be just a routine mission. Upon arrival, they split into two teams, one with 6 firemen and the other with 17. The latter split up one more time when three firemen lost their communication gear and again when the fourth one went checking for the signal, while trying to call his superiors. The remaining 13 were stranded between two hills with no water whatsoever, since the large water canister landed 500 meters away from them. While searching for it, they got encircled by a wall of fire. Although the burning grass was only 10 cm tall, the firemen didn't have the necessary equipment and had nowhere to run. In only a minute, six of them were killed instantly, while the other seven remained lying on the ground, badly burned, waiting for help more than two hours.

Controversies connected with Thompson

As I said on the beginning of the article Thompson became popular with their 1991 hit song "Bojna Čavoglave" (Čavoglave battalion), which was released during the Croatian War of Independence.¹⁹ The song includes the mentioned slogan "Za dom - Spremni!" The term did not originate as an Ustashe slogan. It dates back to the 19th century when it was used as a salute to Josip Jelačić, ban of Croatia. In its initial form, the salute was: "Za dom! – Spremni umrijeti!" (For the homeland! – Ready to die!) However, most people in Croatia put above mentioned salute in context with the period of Ustasha regime and give it the negative connotation.

In 2003, a supposed recording of Thompson performing a modified version of the song "Jasenovac i Gradiška Stara" was made public by Croatian journalist Matija Babić. As I said in previous text this song glorifies the Ustashe crimes in two concentration camps where greatest part of killed were Serbian civilians from the territory of then NDH. Controversial recording was broadcasted by HRT (Croatian Radio Television), what provoked numerous negative public responses (especially among representatives of Serbian minority in Croatia, human rights NGO's, and "Simon Wiesenthal Centre"). All this greatly troubled Thompson's life. He was publicly called the Fascist and Ustasha supporter, and all this resulted with his persecution in Croatian media. However, Thompson persistently denied these accusations explaining that his voice was not on this recording. Thus, Croatian Radio Television established investigative commission which had to determine the authenticity of disputable audio recording. After detailed analysis and hearings of people who had found this recording, commission concluded that Thompson and his bass guitarist T. Orlić were not performers on mentioned recording. Namely, audio analysis of vocal elements of this disputable recording and comparison with original audio and video materials from Thompson's concerts, showed that controversial recording was home-made by very skillful imitators.

Nevertheless, accusations did not cease and Thompson was banned to perform in some European countries. In this situation, he got support from "Hrvatski helsinški odbor" (Croatian Helsinki Committee), who warned Croatian public on human rights and the democracy violations, and denial of artistic expression.

The letter of support and petition in favor of Thompson was signed by several hundreds of Croatia academics, artists, scientists, and politicians.

There's also a controversy with a song called "Evo zore, evo dana!" The lyrics included:

"Hey, Ustashas, my dear brothers, Drina River is deep. We should cross it, and burn Serbia!"²⁰

¹⁹ The song was seen as boosting the morale of the Croatian armed forces. It was later modified by Bosnian soldiers and re-recorded as a song against the Bosnian Serb Siege of Sarajevo.

²⁰ On Croatian: "Oj Ustaše braćo mila, duboka je voda Drina. Drinu treba pregaziti, i Srbiju zapaliti."

End of the song is obvious glorification of Ante Pavelic, the leader of Ustashe movement in WW II. Other than those WW II related remarks in the original, the song was also to include the lyrics which described the political situation in Croatia in 2001, when left – liberal coalition seized the power and removed the conservative – populist HDZ (Croatian Democratic Union). In those added verses leading Croatian politicians I. Račan as prime minister and S. Mesić, as the President were bitterly offended.

Thompson was accused several times for expressing the sympathies for the Ustasha movement. In 2004, the band was barred from having a concert in Amsterdam: in response, Thompson said "I have nothing against the Jews, but neither did Jesus Christ, yet still they crucified Him". This statement caused an outcry in the Croatian media.

The "Simon Wiesenthal Center" posted a letter to Croatian President S. Mesić in June 2007 and expressed "... its sense of outrage and disgust in the wake of a massive show of fascist salutes, symbols and uniforms at a rock concert by popular ultra-nationalist Croatian singer Thompson attended by 60,000 people in Zagreb."²¹ Two weeks after the concert in Zagreb on June 17, 2007, Thompson made this statement regarding claims of the "Simon Wiesenthal Center" that he is a fascist, saying that he and members of his band saw nobody with Ustashe iconography among 60 and more thousand people on "Maksimir stadium".

The most discussed of Thompson's concerts was his first ever banning in Croatia, in the Istrian town of Umag. After this ban, Thompson asked for a concert to be held in Pula, the most populated city of Istria.²² When his demand was refused, he started and lost court actions against the city of Pula because of human rights violations. After the court decision, Thompson's lawyer declared that sooner or later he would sing in Pula. In late December 2008, he managed to organize a concert in the Istrian town of Pazin, even though there were fierce oppositions from IDS (Istrian Democratic Assembly), the leading Istrian political party. These attacks, magnified by Croatian press, led to an increase of tension that reached its climax the night of December 11, when an explosive device was ignited outside the concert venue. Although IDS member of Croatian Parliament Damir Kajin immediately accused Thompson's fans, it turned out later that the offender, who was injured in the deflagration and arrested by police, was acting with the intention of stopping the concert. The concert took place as planned on December 20, 2008, followed by two more shows on December 21 and 22, due to the demand of the Istrian public.

21 "Wiesenthal Center Expresses Outrage At Massive Outburst of Nostalgia for Croatian fascism at Zagreb Rock Concert; Urges President Mesic to Take Immediate Action by "Simon Wiesenthal Center" <http://www.wiesenthal.com/site/pp.asp?c=lsKWLBpJLnF&b=6212365>, accessed: August 18, 2011.

22 Istria is one of the Croatian regions, situated along the Adriatic coast, known for its antifascism, minority toleration and multiculturalism.

M. Perković Thompson's Response to Accusations

Some press has accused Thompson of publicly expressing controversial pro-Ustashe beliefs (e.g. pro-fascist):

*"Anyway, why shouldn't the crowd chant 'Ustaše!, Ustaše!' during my concert? This should be an example to all political structures of how the youth can be unified."*²³

*"There is nothing wrong with my voicing right-wing, Ustaše, beliefs."; "Serbs lie, they are that kind of a people. They can't love us, nor is that natural. They are our eternal sworn enemies."*²⁴

*"I'm glad you cherish our legacy, our songs!"*²⁵

*"Displaying Ustaše symbols in public should not be illegal."*²⁶

*"I don't mind Ustaše symbols. Why should I?"*²⁷

Thompson has stated that he is not an Ustasha nor a fascist, but a patriot. He publicly stated that he means no harm to any other nation, religion, or people of different ideology. Despite this crucial statement, he has publicly voiced his support for the NDH a number of times. His credibility in these statements is diminished not only by this fact but also by the legal necessity to denounce any fascist movement in order to avoid further banning (or other legal action). The "Croatian Helsinki Committee" (HHO) has come out against any potential bans, with its former president Ivo Banac referring to such calls from ex Croatian president S. Mesić and member of Croatian Parliament D. Kajin as a "... weakening of the democratic order".

At his concert in Vukovar on April 13, 2007, Thompson stated: "I can't command anybody what to wear at my concert, and I have never encouraged anybody to wear a cap or shirt with letter U. My message to all of them (and that I would say this evening too, if I saw [anything like that]): "Wear the insignia of the victorious Croatian army from Croatian War of Independence". It is sad that young people return so far in history and fall for propaganda".

Thompson last tour "Bilo jednom u Hrvatskoj" (Once Upon a Time in Croatia) was protested by various Jewish organizations. Held in Frankfurt, the organizations vehemently requested that the German government ban the concert because

23 Statement in the Večernji list daily newspaper, June 2002.

24 Both statements in the Jutarnji list daily newspaper, July 2002.

25 September 2002, when the crowd started chanting "Evo zore, evo dana", a previously mentioned Ustashe song, during his concert on the Poljud stadium in Split, Croatia.

26 Statement in the Jutarnji list daily newspaper, January 2004.

27 Statement in the Globus weekly newsmagazine, August 2005.

of its alleged fascist lyrics. When the German government received the transcript of Thompson's songs, the request to ban the concert was immediately rejected.

At the June 17, 2007, concert at "Maksimir Stadium", Zagreb, Thompson once more stated that he is not a fascist: "I'm often attacked and accused that we are fascists, Nazis, and because of this that you who listen to my music and follow are also. And we hereby say to them that we are not fascists, Nazis, but Croatian patriots. We tell them that there are values that we live for. There were people that we will never forget. And there are dreams that we will never give up. Because this country was made, our Croatia, on the blood and suffering of this generation, victorious generation!"

The audience, in a sign of approval, shouted a medieval Croatian battle-cry (mostly known from Ivan Zajc's opera "Nikola Šubić Zrinski" and today used mostly to boost morale at soccer matches), "U boj, u boj-za narod svoj!" (To the battle, To the battle-for your people!).

In anticipation of the New Year's Eve tour in Australia and New Zealand, Thompson released an interview with the local Croatian community magazine "Hrvatski Vijesnik", a translation of which was also published in the "New Generation" English language supplement. In it, he clearly stated that he and also the great majority of Croats don't have any negative feeling towards the Jewish people or religion, and also expressed sympathy after the recent controversy with the "Simon Wiesenthal Center". However, based on his tumultuous history, which includes many incendiary and hateful remarks towards Serbs and other ethnic groups, coupled with his seeming support for Ustashe movements, this retort was widely believed to be an attempt at politically correct posturing on his part, rather than genuine sympathy. Thompson said: "I have no idea why this is the case, again I stress that there is no ill-feeling between the Jewish and Croatian people, but rather these false reports arise from certain individuals with their own agenda. I have no control of the media and what they publish, I am more concerned with what I do on stage."

Conclusion

Shortly after first free multiparty election in 1990 Croatia gained independence and separated from Yugoslav Federation. Contemporary Croatian society is deeply divided not only on the base of economic and social criteria, but also upon criteria of social values, and world-views. This is especially visible in ideological differentiation related to explanations concerning Croatian past and present events.

In Croatian modern history strong differentiation between leftists (liberals) and rightists (conservatives) was very visible. Each part accused other for war crimes and activities against Croatian independence. In that sense, rightists were accused for their fascist's involvement and atrocities during WW II. On the other side, leftist were accused for Communist repression, lack of democracy, and crimes committed immediately after World War II.

In my opinion these differentiations that still exist in present day Croatia are greatly enforced by the fact that Croatia never passed through the process of objective perceiving the key historical developments. All this is waiting the Croatian scientists and historians who will have to give the impartial and objective historical conclusions.

Also, it would be much easier that all crimes committed in Croatia in the past are treated equally. Here I have in mind crimes and atrocities from NDH fascist regime and communist Yugoslav regime. Also, it is necessary to determine criminal acts which happened during the Homeland war and which were committed from the both sides in the conflict, having in mind that great majority of atrocities were committed by Yugoslav Army and Serbian paramilitary forces.

The case of M. Perković Thompson is in fact the result of above mentioned ideological and political complexity and shows one side of divisions of Croatian society. However, the solutions of all problems will need considerable period of time to be solved, with conditions of further development of democracy, mutual tolerance, and dialogue between "liberals" and "conservatives".

On the question whether Thompson is hero or troublemaker the answer is that his case shares and illustrates ideological division as the core problem of contemporary Croatian society. For a great number of Croats he is a symbol of patriotism, traditional values, and Catholic faith. For the others he is nationalist, extremely conservative Catholic, and even fascist.

On Thompson's example we can conclude that Croatian society didn't make step forward from pre-modern to the modern social context. Obviously, Croatia needs time to overcome mentioned ideological divisions, which exist almost on all levels of Croatian society.

THE PHENOMENON OF THE METAL MAYOR

Tsonko Tsonev was born in 1967, he has master degree in law. Father of three children. Now he still works as a mayor of Kavarna, carrying out his third mandate. Tsonev was a rock fan from his very young years. While his mother taught in Bratislava, he often traveled to Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, first has listened to Led Zeppelin in Budapest and inspired from the Hungarian groups Omega and Piramis. When he was first elected, in 2003, he started inviting rock celebrities from all over the world – DIO, Deep Purple, Whitesnake, Gamma Ray, Accept, Glen Hughes are only some of the famous names, who played in Bulgaria for the first time after the communist regime. The rock-summer festivals became an annual event in Kavarna – “Kaliakra rock fest”. In the website of the municipality there is always a list with the upcoming rock-musical events.¹ First his fellows-citizens wasn't so pleased with the multitude coming in the little silent town, making noise, littering, walking across, looking so strange, even frightening – something usual for the small conservative communities, especially living in isolation and away from such kind of musical styles, forbidden in the years of socialistic Bulgaria. Among the citizens there appeared the expression “We don't want rock, we want asphalt” (because the roads and the infrastructure in the town were in very bad condition). The Mayor replayed that “the asphalt will come with the rock”. And this really happened. Little by little the people see how the tourism and the trade flourish, how there is a job for everyone. For Tsonko being a rock-fan became a way of life and for professional realization.

This Mayor is an example how with the growth of a person, who has a dream he never betrays, the power of the dream, along with the growing experience and governing skills, creates and pulls successfully a structure as an entire town is. This is an example, how the rational and the irrational aspect of the psyche work together, without domination of any of them. The position of the any contemporary man about predicting the achieved by Tsonko results is skeptical, because in our individual kind of culture the Ego rules the Self (the archetype of the entire personality, The Self, according to C. G. Jung). An example of Kavarna and its Mayor sound almost like a fairy-tale, because nowadays the commercial aspect is usually the leading one. In this particularly case this means, that it is more acceptable for the collective conscious and opinion if someone shows calculations how winning is to make annual festivals, not putting at first place emotional motivation, especially if making it for the first time in the country, not using the “good example” (for profits) from somewhere else. But under the layer of the collective

1 <http://kavarna.pro-rock.net/cgi-bin/index.pl> accessed January 11, 2014.

conscious there are other driving forces, universal for everyone and everywhere² that, if detected as leading front in someone, are very prompt recognizable; they have emotional tissue and are appreciable as clear and purposeful intentions by the others. Obtaining big amount and “easy-moving” psychical energy, according to Jungian analytical psychology, persons of that kind are charismatic persons or Manna personalities.³ They take projections and expectations from the others over themselves and have the possibility to transform this energy into activities and structures in the environment. In the mythical concepts, universally, the rich and enterprising person is a charismatic (Manna) person. This is an archetypal form, which fills with different contents in every particular case. The luck, the wealth, the skills and abilities in these concepts are Manna; connected with the Destiny (Wyrd) and/or God. Everything and everyone obtains Manna and to have prestige and richness is to have more Manna. According to the archetypal form, a person like this has the obligation for showing virtues, morality and cares for the community and the nature. He is in connection with all the homological rows in the world: micro-, mezo- and macrocosms. For Jung the concept Manna is equal with the concept of psychical energy. Exactly because of the possession of more Manna, the actions and the impact of the Manna person are with more significance, than the other people’s. These concepts are living universally in people; they are not a stage of the development, but a part of the psyche (according to Eliade⁴ and Jung), it means that they are alive and active in the individual kind of culture, too. Universally the mission and the responsibility of the Manna person is the initiation (recreation) of the world. The Manna person is the leading figure in the rituals (the priest, the shaman), he turns a particular situation to *ilmo tempore* and renovates it on a new, higher level of existence. In this particular case (as it is shown further in the paper), the Mayor is involved in different activities of this kind. People inherit and obtain the archetypal forms, projecting them (unconsciously, unintentionally) to “match” contents they meet “outside” in the environment and in their “inner life” into their pattern. The archetypal form is the reason for the numinous experience. It is the reason that involves the object of the projections and his activities into a cult. The closer a situation is to a primordial

2 The *collective unconscious* is the deepest one, “below” the personal, as the deepest “layer” in the structure of the psyche, the same in all and everyone, as a pattern. That’s why it is universal, because it is identical for all the people (may be the animals, too). The collective unconscious is non-cultural depended. It has its own structure – the archetypes (Jung calls them “organs of the soul”, “images without a face”). Its matter has never been in the conscious. It is inherited structure, primordial, that we all are born with. We cannot observe the unconscious directly, but it has a big impact on our personal activities and way of thinking. “The archetype is an empty form, about which conclusions should be done or could be extracted by abstractions of a class of experienced images or symbols.” Корсини 1998: 81. They are “imprints” of the experience of the forbears, their specific contents as realized images, are ensured by the contents from the conscious experience.

3 From the Melanesian word “Manna” – supernatural force. Quasi-divine force, that is attributed to the wizard, medium, priest, doctor, magician, saint or the pious stupid – to everyone, who has in common with the spiritual world, enough to be its conductor or to radiate its power. The effect of these persons over the others is about the feeling of tangible rising up the conscious. Самюелз и др. 1995: 94-95. The cult, religion and institutions have archetypal basis – they present the psychical structure and are objects for projections, they express the human concepts about how the Word is structured.

4 Елиаде 2000: 7.

pattern, the better is its acceptance and acclamation by people. Important trait of a Manna person is to show in his activity not only rational aspects: in this particular case this is the musical passion that locates the person not only in the profane world. The naked pragmatism has nothing in common with Manna. The idealistic meaning of the rock music, especially in the years of the socialism, the experience of the unity with the other fans, that this particular music style brings, along with the governing skills of the Mayor, create the emotional basis for the development of a responsible, hard- and team-working rebel. The charismatic person acts in the different worlds and dimensions, in a good coordination.

The Kavarna case is comparable with the one in Wacken, a small rural town in Germany, where in the bottom of the big annual metal festival⁵ stays a group of young fans.⁶ The attitude of the locals first was the same, as the Kavarna citizens. The evolution of the case follows the same pattern of this social phenomenon – the suspicious about the “alien” presence people became glad being hosts of such a significant event, participating in the organization, accommodation, providing supplements and nice attitude to the ones they still don’t understand, but accept and support, even do all these for living. According to the analytical psychology, the patterns (having unconscious roots and dynamic) are universal, but the diversities depend on the cultural and individual/personal background – as it is visible in both of these cases.

The work of Tsonko Tsonev reveals him as a charismatic person. According to the Bulgarian musician Dancho Karajov, Tsonko is a missionary, with a mission “to redact the living history of rock”. And maybe this is the key to become a celebrity – the balance between cognitions and emotions, to wish and to can, with the leading position of the emotion, the idea – work, done “by heart”. It is the belief in the idea that gives the strong motivation to create something even there is no visible preconditions for it and when none believes in; it helps carrying out the burden and the fame to be first, to pave the way of something. The idea is the thing that urges the people to follow, to love and to believe such persons.

Another charismatic trait, that guarantees stability and development, is keeping close to people, being humble. “It is very rare compelled me to wear formal shoes, that’s why I prefer sport shoes”⁷, he says to the young actors, shooting production “Sport shoes” in the area, visiting him for interview. The people talk about “Tsonko”, using his first name, feeling close distance. Being a Mayor of a tourist sea town, he takes participation in fun competitions and feasts, such as the “Traditional fish and mussel feast” near Kavarna, where in the summer of 2010 he won the first prize, cooking a “fish ala Gypsies”. He also promised to edit a recipe-book for seafood meals, presented on the feast. The Mayor gives personal example in campaigns, participating in the cleaning the Kaliakra stadium. In some special days, holidays, the Mayor organizes musical events, inviting famous groups for concerts on the town square, for free. Tsonko shares that in the musical

5 <http://www.wacken.com/> accessed January 11, 2014.

6 See the movie “Full Metal Village” by *Sung-Hyung Cho*.

7 <http://www.slava.bg/news/31107.html> accessed January 11, 2014.

plan his ambitions are to bring big bands in Bulgaria and in personal – to push in irreversible way the development of municipality of Kavarna. There are scores of investors, who are irreversibly connected with the town already.

If the manna personality identifies himself with the archetype, which happens easily when the people treat him as an archetype, not as a real person, he comes to psychical inflation. This means identification with the collective psyche because of the rushing of the unconscious contents or as a result of the widening of the conscious. The people recognize the archetype and demand it, but none can live a life of an archetype. If he tries, the following is disorientation and the feeling of enormous power and uniqueness or of insignificance (the first is hypo-maniacal condition, the second – depression). This happens when the conscious takes too much from the unconscious and loses the ability to delimit. It goes beyond the borders of the humanity and loses its free will, becoming mistrustful, suspicious and insane.⁸ In this particular case the individual traits of the person resist this danger that is devastating for the leader, his activities and the others. It is important the people to take the “sacred” and the “profane” as a whole, to create a balance and this depends on the characteristics of the person himself, to resist the pressure of the archetype – inside and outside. The balance is possible because of the traits of the manna person and because of the other people – when they recognize it and it is established in their expectations. Otherwise the crowd, “summoning” the archetype (because of its numinous influence) in someone with delicate equilibrium, will help for the inflation to grow. The history gives a lot of examples for such a misbalance, but it is not a creative and is doomed.

The political changes, the new post-communistic situation is a real challenge, revealing the true capacity of someone’s abilities – it is not enough to have only unfulfilled dreams or “making money” skills. For the good manager the balance between, to be a hard working visionary, involving and organizing the efforts of the others, guarantees the success.⁹

In Kavarna there are big wallpapers on the facades of the blocks of flats (Bulgarian artist’s projects), with the huge images of the rock-idols, who performed in the town through the years. Images of such a kind, along with the concerts and other activities, which “rise up the conscious”, connected with irrational values, much more than just commercial, are connected with the cult (of the entire phenomenon of rock and heavy metal) that the Mayor attends to. Such objects and events are important conditions for a place to become a “sacred” (a famous – in rational plan). The Mayor got the pun-name “kmetal” (a “fusion” from the Bulgarian word for mayor “kmet” and “metal”, which in Bulgarian stands for the music style and the fan of that music style). “Kmetal” is the name of his personal website, too. Being a true fan, not just organizer with indifferent attitude

8 Самюелз и др. 1995: 81-82.

9 This is an example of the transcendental function, defined by Jung as a connection between the real and the imaginary or rational and irrational data, which throws a bridge over the abyss between the conscious and unconscious. It helps the passing from one psychological attitude to another. It is possibility the destructive tendencies to be exceeded and to escape from the partiality, giving more than the subjective perspective. Самюелз и др. 1995: 184-185.

to the music and interested only in the profits, is a position that makes Tsonko a personal friend with many of the rock celebrities. He attends the concerts in person, wearing Heavy Metal clothing and without security guards. The ability for personal approach to people, which he possesses and establishes, is a trait of a charismatic person and ensures deeper involvement and responsibility about the mutual efforts. This affects the attitude of his friends and their international fans to Bulgaria and the Bulgarians in general, creating the image of the country. They get unforgettable memories and extremely warm acceptance here, becoming not just acquainted with the country, but feeling the post-communist craving for their music – something, that probably returns them in the years of their grater fame or even more. As an example for this is the reverence that the group Manowar made to the Bulgarian fans, performing the Bulgarian anthem, on their concert on July 7th 2007, on “Kaliakra” stadium, Kavarna. And even more: next year the group was in Kavarna again, setting a new Guinness record – for longest concert (more than five hours) on July 6th 2008, choosing Kavarna for this event.

But this is not the only field that the Mayor supports. He is a president of the football club Kaliakra/Kavarna and his ambition is to put it in the “A-League”. Thanks to the Mayor, Kavarna becomes a host of the World championship of semi marathon in 2012, winning the competition against the candidature of New York; Tsonko builds bridges in different fields, communicating and creating personal friendships not only with musicians, but with other celebrities, too, such as, for example, the athletes Sergei Bubka and Tímea Gabriella Szabó. Tsonko is also responsible for the creation of “one of the three best golf playgrounds in the world” near Kavarna, inviting Garry Player as a designer for the project. The Mayor is open for different activities and initiatives. Along with the all benefits, connected with the festival tourism, the real estate market in the region is affected too. Some of the world musical celebrities buy houses in the area, near the sea. The Mayor achieves very good results in the field of the integration of the Gipsy minority in the region. The way he points is simple: to work with and for everyone, no matter from the ethnic ancestry, to integrate in job-projects everyone. The “multiple approach” to the recourses of the town and the width of the range of the projects he finds and fulfils, ensures stability for the region and the participation of people with different status, professions and skills. It also gives opportunity for visitors and investors with different interests to be directed to Kavarna and Bulgaria. From analytical psychology point of view, this is a rational expression of the initiation of the three homological parts of the world – micro-, mezo- and macrocosms.

Another function that the “kmetal” fulfils recently is to marry people. He points, that this is something he likes much more than being a divorce lawyer and warns and guarantees, that the couple he marries will never be divorced (so its good to think well before coming to him). On the marriages sometimes he personally plays a guitar solo. Fulfilling the duty of a leading figure in rituals is an obligation of the Manna person (to carry out the authority has ritual traits in general).

Here are some statements about Tsonko Tsonev of famous persons from Bulgaria and abroad, posted on his personal website (www.kmetal.eu).

Joey DeMaio (Manowar), June 2008: "Tsonko Tsonev is my hero. We have a dream. And it is to make Kavarna metal capital of the world. Not just on Balkans, but of the entire world. And I'm here to help. He is really a different and unique person. It is very rare someone to talk good things about a politician. No matter young or old, everyone says that he is a good man. Tsonko is from that kind of persons, that you would like to meet on the road when you have problems with your car, someone, who will really help you. And secondly, he has power that he uses to make good things for his town, for his country and for his love – the music. He is different."

John Lawton, October 2007: "I wish to every Bulgarian town to have one Tsonko."

Glenn Hughes, October 2007: "My reason to come in Bulgaria is my brother – the metal Mayer Tsonko."

Hristo Mutafchiev (actor), September 2007: "Everything, that Tsonko has done is clear, it is visible. We should vote for him, because first – he is a personality, second – he is a leader, and third – he is a man, who has a lot of cultural and morality virtues and values and supports them."

Georgi Parvanov, the President of the Republic of Bulgaria, October 2007: "We should work for the education in long terms, not only in the beginning of the new school year. Take for example the schools in Kavarna municipality. Here the things are different. Not because someone has painted the walls two weeks before the school opening day, but because it is cozy and there is order and the teachers acknowledge this, too."

About himself he says: "I'm an idealist, who realizes his own ideas."¹⁰

The multiple activities, the idealism and enthusiasm, used as engines for a clear creative vision for development, staying humble and communicative are traits, that good describes the Mayor Tsonko Tsonev. The usual mistrust and even hate the people express about many of administrators and politicians cannot be connected with his personality. These are universal traits of charismatic persons, whose impact depends on individual characteristics in the personality, expressed in particular cultural background and in their contemporary times as a whole.

¹⁰ <http://kmetal.eu/index.php?do=interview&id=9> accessed January 11, 2014.

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Fig. 1-2. Blocks of flats in Kavarna, decorated with images of Rock Stars
(Photo: Svetlan Stefanov, 2011)



Fig. 3-4. Blocks of flats in Kavarna, decorated with images of Rock Stars
(Photo: Vasilena Stefanova, 2012)



Fig. 5. Memorial in Kavarna (created by Bulgarian sculptors), dedicated to the rock singer Ronnie James Dio after his death. On the picture – the reveal of the memorial, Tsonko Tskonev (left) and Simon Wright – drummer of Ronnie James Dio Group (right).
(Photo: Andon Donev, the picture is kindly conceded by www.katehizis.com)

SLOVENIAN BUBBLE CELEBRITIES.

Establishing and maintaining celebrity status on the internet

Introduction

"Had the best time in #Slovenia tonight raging on stage with two of my favorite DJ's @DJAfrojack & @DavidGuetta," wrote Paris Hilton on Twitter online social network in mid December 2011. Her post was available to be read by more than seven million followers who keep track of what is going on in the public and personal life of the starlet, as media like to refer to her. Her visit to Slovenia, however, was not recorded only in short posts online, but was picked up by the media. Journalists would track any move she made and wrote that her appearance was "far from being staged promotionally" as she would take her time to remain beside DJ Afrojack and "dance, animate the audience, play about with her sunglasses, and still she found the time to redo her lipstick."¹ Paris Hilton was also included in reviews of society reporting for 2011, an example stating that in mid December "all eyes were on the infamous hotel heiress."²

Who then is Paris Hilton to be catching the public's gaze both at the global and local levels, and why are there several million people who know about her? The great-granddaughter of Conrad Hilton, founder of the famous hotel chain, became world famous in 2003 when a clip of her having sex with the current partner leaked online and spread rapidly across the Internet, and was later released on a DVD having the ambiguous title *One Night in Paris*.³ She is also famous for her occasional appearances in films, such as the horror film *The House of Wax*, and the romantic comedy *The Hot Chick* and *The Hot Chick*, for which she was awarded two golden raspberries, i.e. parody awards for worst appearances in film. On top of that she has presented her singing abilities in the public and released a music

1 Kopina 2011.

2 T. H. 2012.

3 The amateur video clip that was recorded already in 2001, was analysed by Thomas Fahy in a chapter of *Pop-Porn*. He explains that the video has gained extreme popularity as viewers tend to feel certain pleasure due to the fact that the rich heiress strips off in front of them, thus being subject to public humiliation because anyone can see the intimacy of her life. A person hitherto famous and out of reach becomes fragile and vulnerable, no longer glamorous (Fahy 2007). However, paradoxical as it seems, it is this humiliating clip that has made Paris Hilton a global celebrity, and she made good use of the fame gained. She thus managed to turn the negative social and economical capital that she had accumulated into her own good, transforming it into cultural capital (cf. Bourdieu 1986, where the author defines various types of capital). Carmine Sarracino and Kevin M. Scott expand on this in *The Porning of America*, saying that the online clip actually consolidated the image of a porn star, which Paris Hilton had been establishing earlier on with her public appearances, always showing herself as a superficial, self-centred and material person (Sarracino and Scott 2008: 110).

album, appeared in reality shows and took up the central role in the TV series *The Simple Life*.⁴

As a matter of fact, Paris Hilton is mostly known for her well-knownness. This is approximately how the status of celebrities⁵ was lucidly defined by the American historian Daniel J. Boorstin.⁶ Indeed, his explanation is completely tautological, but it is actually the most precise of all. According to him, the whole social world is subdued to the principles of looking for and recognising something in nothing, with our acts having become tautology – “needless repetition of the same in different words and images.” He also emphasises how we have become real masters of ascribing meaning to substantially “empty” people with no surplus value, and to trivial events generated by such people to hold on to the celebrity sphere.⁷

Boorstin’s findings from early 1960s can easily be mirrored to the present time and transferred into the local environment. In Slovenia, there are also people comparable to Paris Hilton, who at the local level are mostly known for their well-knownness. In the article I shall present four such individuals – *bubble celebrities* – whose careers as well as the formation and affirmation of their stardom I have been following. The first bubble celebrity whose path as a celebrity I shall describe is Fredi Miler. The musician from the Koroška region, noted for his moustache and the monobrow, rose to fame in 2004 with the video clip *Vedno si sanjala njega*, in which he appears wearing unusual clothes, including a vest in fluorescent yellow. The second celebrity to be presented is Dr. Artur Štern, a former lecturer at the Biotechnical Faculty of the University of Ljubljana and co-founder of Bion Institute, who abandoned his scientific (and partly artistic) career to dedicate his life to media appearances and the formation of a celebrity “character” oscillating between a drunkard and a genius. The third celebrity is Urška Hočvar Čepin whose fame is based on her looks and appearances in reality shows rather than her music career. The fourth example of a bubble celebrity is Damjan Murko, the self-proclaimed “Slovenian nightingale” who has been shaping masterly his public image for a decade, although people often fail to understand what keeps him in the media sphere.

The basic activity of all four bubble celebrities is to maintain and “boost” their images. They thus keep appearing in TV shows, attending obscure events and publishing their (auto)biographies, in which they lay bare the intimate details of their lives. The article shall present their efforts in this regard and explain how the emergence and affirmation of celebrity statuses are affected by online social networks (such as Facebook), and in relation to this, what is the role of websites that enable people to share video clips, e.g. YouTube. I argue that the Internet

4 Paris Hilton described her career in detail in her self-promotional (auto)biography entitled *Confession of an Heiress*, which was published in 2004. However, a much more detailed overview of her private life and public appearances was written by Sandra Gurvis (2011).

5 The word derives from Latin, its original meaning being that of fame (*celebritas*) or being either famous, celebrated, renowned or crowded, busy, populous (*celeber*).

6 Boorstin 1992: 57.

7 Boorstin 1992: 60.

is an extremely efficient platform for creating celebrities who can then keep (re) creating events to maintain their presence in the media sphere and increase their popularity. My argument follows Schickel's⁸ assumption on the tight connection between stardom and communication technologies. He claims that in the 20th century it really was the media that created celebrities. I have noticed, however, that the Internet has taken their creation even further, thus enabling the formation of bubble celebrities who barely need the media anymore as they take complete care of (self) promotion by themselves.⁹

Methodological problems in watching celebrities

The major materials that I explored before conducting the ethnographic research were (auto)biographies published by the celebrities mentioned in early stages of their careers. Fredi Miler described the path from a manual worker to a famous and recognisable person in a book entitled *Fredi Miler – štorija (Fredy Miler – The Story)*, which was adapted and written down by Iztok Vrhovec (2005). Artur Štern also presented his academic, artistic and celebrity career in written form, yet somewhat less directly, based on fictional characters, e.g. in novels *Skrb za gene (Worry about Genes)*, *Šarlatanska vednost (Charlatan's Knowledge)* (2001a) and *Jeba z lipicanci (Disturbing Lipica Horses)* (2001b),¹⁰ in a column collection *Ne predaleč od epicentra (Not Too Far From the Epicentre)* (2008) and in the book *Metabioigra (Metabiogame)* (1998). In 2009, Urška Hočevar Čepin also published her (auto)biography *Prekletstvo v zlati kletki (The Curse in a Golden Cage)*, which was written and adapted by Nana Nataša Zeneli. The book describes her "sensational story", as is explained in the subtitle, the focus being on her failed marriage to a businessman. Damjan Murko presented the intimate details of his life in the book *Srečen, ker sem moški (Happy To Be a Man)*, which was published in 2009, his story having been written down by Marjanca Scheicher.¹¹

⁸ Schickel 2000.

⁹ In the afterword to the 2000 edition of the book that was originally published in 1985, which is before the creation of the World Wide Web, Schickel updates his findings, saying that it was Internet that became the central driving force to form celebrities, as it provides everyman with the illusion that they can contribute notably to the (re)formation of the social world (Schickel 2000: 300). That is to say, anybody can be a celebrity on the Internet – or at least have the feeling to be in the centre of a social network made by themselves (see Podjed 2010; cf. also Dalsgaard 2008, exploring the egocentric design of online networks that automatically place users in the centre of activity).

¹⁰ These texts were also published in the collection of five novels entitled *Šepet razglašanih (The Whisper of the Untuned)* (2007).

¹¹ Marjanca Scheicher is also the author of two partly fictional novels that examine the Slovenian show business, which are entitled *Kešpička (Gold Digger)* (Scheicher 2010, 2011a). She also wrote the biography of the "greatest Slovenian porn star" La Toya (Scheicher 2011b). This celebrity was not included in the article based on my assessment that she fails to correspond completely to Boorstin's tautological definition of celebrities being known for their well-knownness. La Toya mainly became famous due to her work in the pornography industry, which provides her knownness with a somewhat more substantial basis. True, she appeared in the same reality shows as other bubble celebrities (e.g. *The Farm*). Also, she was married (unofficially) for a brief period of time to Artur Štern, whom I present later in the article.

On top of that I have been gathering the data on Slovenian bubble celebrities online. I checked their presentation pages, as well as followed their online blogs and posts on Facebook.¹² I analysed their profiles (short presentations, photographs, etc.) on the network, trying to figure out how they presented themselves online and how they pictured their everyday life.¹³

I concluded my research by semi structured interviews with the celebrities. I visited Fredi Miler at his home in Mežica, talked to Artur Štern in a local bar in Miklavž na Dravskem polju, met Damjan Murko in the restaurant of a prestigious hotel in Maribor, whereas Urška Hočevar Čepin answered my questions by e-mail. Each interview served as a short participant observation of a kind and it was only when meeting these people in person that their complex image emerged, whereas previously I had only known about them through books, media and the Internet. While meeting them I was striving to see through "stardust" to find the "authentic", "pristine" and "unfeigned" persons as they appear in their private lives. This was far from easy because bubble celebrities, as we shall see, cannot afford to rest. They have to consolidate their created identity ("mask") even during seemingly relaxed discussions.

My presentation of the four celebrities is not based only on their "view of themselves", which they provided in interviews, (auto)biographies and web profiles, as I shall also partly describe the interaction and context with regard to the discussion. This enables us to learn a bit more about their public-private image, about how they integrate in the local environment and what their self is like as a combination of their individual and social self.¹⁴

Theories of celebrity self-performance

As the starting point to analyse the public and private image of Slovenian celebrities I have been using Boorstin's work *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America*, which was first released in 1961, but still remains very much relevant. The author managed to explain, two decades before Baudrillard,¹⁵ how important fictional and inflated images, and copies, which are appreciated more than originals, are to the contemporary society. His work focuses in detail on *pseudo-events*, i.e. the seeming, artificially created events that "from their very nature tend to be more interesting and more attractive than spontaneous events"¹⁶ and defines their eight common features. As compared to unstaged events, the pseudo-events are: 1) more dramatic; 2) quicker to spread and become noticeable; 3) repeatable; 4) dependent on financial input; 5) easier to understand and accept; 6) more socially

12 The Twitter network, which has gained strong popularity in some parts of the world, is not used by Slovenian bubble celebrities to the same extent as it is by Paris Hilton and other famous people of the same kind.

13 Cf. Goffman 1990.

14 Cf. Mead 1997 and his concepts of "I" and "Me".

15 Baudrillard 1999.

16 Boorstin 1992: 37.

acceptable; 7) necessary to know if we wish to remain “informed”; 8) multiplying exponentially. As shall be shown, these features are easy to recognise – maybe in an even more apparent form – when analysing self promotional videos and photographs that spread (or are spread) either across online social networks and portals such as YouTube or across mass media.

An important contribution to theories on stardom and fame was also made by Chris Rojek, explaining that celebrities are a cultural construct that is used by contemporary societies to replace the disappearing authority of kings and gods.¹⁷ Similarly to Weber who wrote of three types of authority (traditional, rational-legal, charismatic),¹⁸ Rojek explains that there are three forms of the celebrity status: ascribed, achieved and attributed. The ascribed celebrity status is related to inheritance, thus being the privilege of the likes of noble descendants. The second category comprises the people who acquire their celebrity status based on their exceptional achievements, such as famous film stars, athletes and musicians. The most interesting for this discussion, however, is the third category of celebrities, which includes those to whom status is attributed although they display no special talents or skills.¹⁹ Such people who are acknowledged the celebrity status while failing to create anything substantial, and who mainly establish and maintain their fame based on pseudo-events, are referred to by Rojek as *celetoids*. However, I consider the phrase bubble celebrities an equally adequate translation as it describes individuals who possess no special talents and cannot pride in achievements, yet they remain present in media and recognisable in public. Turner²⁰ further explains that such celebrities might enjoy “a hyper-visibility” but also an especially short and unpredictable lifespan, as they can flare up and burn out in just a few months or even weeks.

Apart from many authors who explore famous people or celebrities,²¹ an analysis of establishing and maintaining fame has to consider theories on the spread of information across online networks, which I presented in more detail in my article on individuals who have gained fame more or less accidentally thanks to clips posted online.²² There is a major difference between people who have gained fame unexpectedly, and bubble celebrities as the topic of my current research, particularly in the ability of the latter to create pseudo-events by themselves, for which they often make use of online technologies. For example, they accumulate a lot of so-called *friends* whom they keep bombarding with news of themselves and sending previously prepared i.e. contrived clips. Having the position of *hubs*, i.e. people who in comparison to other “nodes” in the network possess an extreme number of connections, they can keep informing a wide range of people about their private and public events from their everyday life, as well as their feelings, thoughts and future feats. In short, the topology of online networks, where

17 Rojek 2001: 13.

18 Weber 1968.

19 Rojek 2001: 17–18.

20 Turner 2004: 22.

21 E.g. Dyer 2007; Jaffe 2005; Holmes and Redmond 2006.

22 Podjed 2009.

a handful have acquired an extremely large amount of connections,²³ enables this group to maintain their privileged and particularly visible position, not only online but also in the physical world, at the same time constantly expanding their area of influence.

When deliberating online networks in relation to stardom, the metaphor of *rhizome* by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari might also be used.²⁴ They use the term to describe a network with a constantly growing structure, which therefore cannot be presented using a static model. Slovenian bubble celebrities, as shall be seen, also connect into such a rhisomatic structure. They are constantly on the lookout to try to outdo each other and prove to be better, different, real celebrities, whereas their roles are actually intertwined inseparably at the same level. This is because they appear in the same TV and reality shows, and maintain friendships over online networks and in the physical environment.

The fading star of Fredi Miler

Fredi Miler was the first Slovenian bubble celebrity who became famous thanks to a clip that spread over the Internet. Until 2004 he was mainly a manual worker. He used to work in a mine and a sawmill, paint houses, fit plasterboards, work in plastering and similar manual works, but also sing in an ensemble. In collaboration with the once very famous Slovenian musician Marijan Smode he recorded the song *Vedno si sanjala njega*, for which he also made a video that was played on a Slovenian commercial TV station.²⁵ The clip shows Miler playing pinball in a pub, wearing a white shirt, and over it a green-yellow vest with a psychedelic pattern. The combination of the lyrics, with the chorus “vedno si sanjala njega” (“you’ve always been dreaming him”) sang with a typically acute *é* in “njega” (“him”), and of the singer’s appearance was so strange that “two metalheads” says Miler, posted the clip online. “They somehow thought it a prank, saying that I had this vest and white socks and slippers and the shirt untucked and the monobrow,” he revealed self-critically what made the clip so interesting to have gained tens of thousands of online views in a matter of weeks. Miler was warned about the spread of the clip by his son, but he still failed to realise what was going on – one of the reasons being his poor knowledge of Internet’s operation. It was only when a widely read free newspaper published an article about Fredi Miler being sought that he realised about the sudden shift in his life.

His first performance as a celebrity was in the vicinity of Novo mesto, a city in Southeast Slovenia, where he played for “fifty grand”, a few times the sum he had been used to receiving in his ensemble. When he arrived at the concert venue it still wasn’t quite clear to him what was going on until the organiser explained:

23 See e.g. Barabási 2003; Watts 2004.

24 Guattari 1990, 2004.

25 When Fredi Miler became famous and recognisable, a dispute emerged between him and Smode regarding the authorship of the song *Vedno si sanjala njega*.

"Fred, you are now the greatest star in Slovenia!" At the concert he was received by an audience shouting and raising hands, and wanting him to repeat the song *Vedno si sanjala njega* at least five times. He explained he had other songs in his repertoire, yet they insisted that he sing the Internet hit.

In the first six months following the turning point, Miler performed more than sixty charity concerts, mainly in discotheques,²⁶ and also appeared at a big concert in the Slovenian capital, organised by the newspaper that "discovered" Miler. This was followed by a number of years of his appearances on various TV shows, magazine covers, reality shows, etc.

Gradually his recognisability faded, which was mostly due to the fact that he took his celebrity status too "seriously", thus failing to ensure in due course new pseudo-events that would be uncommon enough to attract public attention. He thus remains recognisable, but cannot live off fame exclusively. The status of bubble celebrity even causes him quite some trouble. When going shopping or to a bank with his wife, he rather waits in the car than accompany her as he finds it annoying to listen to busybodies posing provocative questions. He is hurt when people make fun of him, but he has been noticing that people tend to accept him more and more because in the recent years they realised what he "really was like". He attended the celebrity format of the *Farm* reality show to demonstrate to people who he really was and what he could do. As it would seem, Fredi Miler wishes to get rid of the "virtual image" from the clip for *Vedno si sanjala njega*, but the media keep returning to the topic, journalists asking him to put on the vest again and do some break dancing moves.²⁷ He usually refuses such proposals explaining that he has been having health problems. Since he worked in a mine, he has been having trouble with his hand and finds it difficult even holding a microphone, let alone perform manual work. He finds it embarrassing to register with the Employment service of Slovenia, he explains, as he is "kind of a celebrity", so everybody says to him, "Oh, what are you doing here? Surely you perform and earn I don't know how much!"

From a parody and comical character, Fredi Miler turned into a tragic personality. The fame that he acquired with the web clip practically overnight was especially exploited by other people who transformed it into economic capital, whereas his social and financial position has deteriorated rather than improved in a bit less than a decade of bubble celebrity status. The only capital he managed to enhance are friendships on Facebook and other social networks, but being a former bubble celebrity it is not easy for him to capitalise that.

It is interesting how tightly related Miler's career is to the rise of online networks that were blooming right in the time when *Vedno si sanjala njega* became a

²⁶ Miler is now aware that this was often only professed charity nature and the organisers were taking advantage of his gullibility.

²⁷ In former Yugoslavia, Fredi Miler was among the most successful dancers of *electric boogie*, which resembles the better known *break dance*. This is why journalists would ask him to *break* a little, i.e. to dance.

viral hit.²⁸ It was online networks – and naturally, their key players – and video posting portals that first created the celebrity and then drained him. Boorstin explains that “The very agency which first makes the celebrity in the long run inevitably destroys him. He will be destroyed, as he was made, by publicity. The newspapers make him and they un-make him – not by murder, but by suffocation or starvation.”²⁹ In the case of Fredi Miler, newspapers can be substituted by or upgraded to online networks, but the “starvation” principle is similar in both cases. If you fail to create new pseudo-events and to attract enough attention in the network, the bubble celebrity status might evaporate quickly and the only thing that remains of the former glory is the shell of fame.

The merging faces of Artur Štern

In late 1990s when Artur Štern was researching and lecturing at the university, he was pulled from the academic world in a swirl of fame. He started writing magazine columns and appearing on TV quizzes and reality shows. In 2007 he was also collecting petition signatures as he intended to run for President of Slovenia,³⁰ but mostly he attended various events, making sure to remain in the centre of attention. Apart from printed and electronic media, he was implementing self-performance over the Internet. For some time he was making regular updates to his webpage and writing several *blogs*. Moreover, a number of clips appeared on YouTube featuring him naked to the waist as he was showing amateur journalists around his estate, explaining about his marriage to the porn actress La Toya or being dead drunk while singing the song *Mrtva reka* (*The Dead River*), which was once performed by Marijan Smode. Štern updates regularly his Facebook profile where he presents himself as “presidiot, drunkard, faker, porn-fucker, metabiologist, polyhistor, writer (16 + 6 books), lecturer, master of martial arts, Dr Sc Biol, M Sc Med, DVM, EPU Graduate... in short – an idler”.

In January 2012, I visited Štern in a rural settlement close to Maribor, the second largest Slovenian city. I arrived to the house where he lived with his fifth “wife”,³¹ and entered the ground floor where he had arranged his residence. His outward appearance was pretty miserable as his eye was covered in a big bruise, and he was wearing patched trousers and worn-out boots. He put a leather jacket over his

28 On the so-called viral video clips, see e.g. Burgess (2008). On the development of online social networks, see Boyd and Ellison (2008). On the development of YouTube portal and its sociocultural consequences, see Lovink and Niederer (2008), Burgess and Green (2009), and Snickars and Vonderau (2009). Cf. also Podjed (2010), expanding on the importance of Facebook at local and global levels, and Podjed (2011), where it is explained how amateur video clips posted on YouTube affect our everyday life.

29 Boorstin 1992: 63.

30 The pseudo-event, with which Štern tried to ascend to the presidential position, was the topic of the documentary film *The Naked Truth* recorded by the director Vojko Anzeljc. The film was shown in theatres in 2008.

31 Štern’s previous marriages, for which it remains unclear whether they were real, were mainly public-oriented pseudo-events. As regards media attention, the marriage with his third “wife”, the porn star La Toya, was particularly prominent.

T-shirt with a large logo of a comic book hero and we headed to the local bar La Boheme. It became clear of what vital importance fame, although only seeming, is to him as on the way to the bar he stopped at the roadside news-stand to check whether a tabloid had run a story on him. They had not so he called the journalist with whom he had "arranged the publication" in rage and disappointment.

While drinking a *corretto* coffee, into which he poured a decilitre of brandy, he managed an unusual discussion in which he – although still very much intoxicated from the previous day – talked very lucidly of the topics that interested him in his academic explorations. For a while he spoke sensibly of altruism, which had been the central topic of his doctoral dissertation, but then his line of thought broke, he gave a weird grimace and began to utter profanities aloud. Artur, the intellectual, was replaced in front of my eyes by Artur, the eccentric. As the debate progressed, we then mostly spoke of the creation of his public "character" and how it was transferred into his private life. I suspected that the source of such acting inspiration might have been his father, a former theatre actor, to whom Artur referred to as "the handsomest, the best" which is why many women had been in love with him, and many managers jealous. "You know what, though," he threw in, "he was a bit conceited, just like me." He then provided a story of his growing up between Ljubljana, where his parents lived, and a smaller town where he would often stay with his grandparents, and described his media presence, which began in late 1980s when he first appeared on the television. Several parts of the strenuous and ambivalent discussion were never completed as Štern had a fight with the waitress and we had to abandon the place early.

Štern's public appearance has merged almost completely with his individual self. As it would seem, his desire for recognisability and fame made him realise that it was his personal image that was most attractive to the masses³² – more attractive than his past scientific and artistic activity. He thus has to maintain and reaffirm his drunken bohemian character constantly if he is to be invited to new TV shows, reality shows, events... This means that with Štern, the dividing line between the "front stage" and the "back stage" (see Goffman 1990) has disappeared. His identities have merged into one, which he "uses" both in public and personal domains.

The inflating bubble of Urška Hočevar Čepin

Urška Hočevar Čepin disclosed herself to the public in detail in the 2009 book *Prekletstvo v zlati kletki* (*The Curse in a Golden Cage*), in which she described the rise and fall of her love story with the wealthy owner of a car dealership, who among other things helped fulfil two major wishes of hers. Namely, she was given as an engagement present the keys to "her dream car, a BMW M3 sports cabriolet in golden yellow with leather seats in kiwi green"³³ and her partner also financed her

³² Cf. Turner 2004: 3.

³³ Zeneli 2009: 32.

the cosmetic procedure of breast augmentation. She also explains in the book how her husband “had always dreamt of glamour and the image of celebrities,” which is why he would “construct her according to his wishes” to be able to exhibit himself with her in the media.³⁴ This statement serves as a very adequate description of the superficiality of bubble celebrities, which often mostly depends on outward appearance. “Live image has shaded the boring reality,” explains Boorstin³⁵ and such images, according to Baudrillard,³⁶ are the only reality there is. In his opinion we live in a simulation rather than reality, surrounded by simulacra that no longer refer to the actuality. The image of Urška Hočevar Čepin is also created, apparent, fictional, changing, variable. And it is her “plastic”, “pliable”, “adaptable” appearance that emphasises the essence of her being.³⁷ Mike Featherstone claims that in consumer cultures we actually keep (re)shaping our appearances according to own or others’ wishes. “Such understandings emphasise the visual, pointing toward a world of gazes and mirrors and spectacles where the eye is the central sense and the body is major focus.”³⁸

In the case of Urška Hočevar Čepin the making of outward appearance, which is created either by resorting to cosmetic surgery or by her specific clothing and make-up, is a certain pseudo-event, resonating in public. Thus the bubble celebrity as such was made an event, “a human pseudo-event” of a kind as Boorstin would call it. Nevertheless, she claims that her fame and recognisability are not built on “some so-called affairs, fake stories, clown poses” and adds that she “doesn’t have to call the media or even bribe them, as a certain sphere of media people do”. This might even be true as rather than creating events, her recognisability has been built on her specific outward appearance, which enables her to host events and TV shows as well as appear in reality shows. In 2010 she was even engaged by the Government Communication Office of the Republic of Slovenia to record a promotional video for the campaign supporting the referendum on pension reform. In a series of parody statements she presented her view of the changes to the pension system, which should make people think that the quasi-expert statements of “an unschooled blonde are plain wrong”. The video aroused a heated response and was thus removed by the Government Communication Office, the Government at the time distancing itself from it, but it was kept available on YouTube, where it recorded more than a hundred thousand views.

However, the recognisability of Hočevar Čepin is not related only to YouTube, but also to Facebook, where her central profile (she has several – and obviously there are some fake examples) has acquired five thousand “friends”, thus reaching the maximum number allowed by the online network. On the so-called *wall*, where Facebook users post their messages, she informs her friends on a regular basis about her appearances, and also presents intimate details from her life. For example, she leaves a message for her mum on mother’s day, posts a photograph

34 Zeneli 2009: 109.

35 Boorstin 1992: 13.

36 Baudrillard 1999.

37 Cf. Lord cited in Rogers 1999: 113.

38 Cited in Rogers 1999: 113.

of her sister, explains how she feels on the divorce anniversary, and especially keeps posting photographs on which she is mainly the central player. Often inviting the gaze to her deep cleavage, her photographs usually attract dozens of comments – both positive and negative – and record more than a hundred *likes*.³⁹ Each online appearance is therefore a minor pseudo-event, which affirms and maintains the status of bubble celebrity for Urška Hočevar Čepin. Although she denies to be concerned about not being famous and recognisable anymore, and to be pondering things in advance, as everything she does, “happens incidentally, spontaneously” there is still certain intention and system, although at a more unconscious level, to be perceived in her online activity and affirmation of her image and status by means of online “friends”.

The master of pseudo-events, Damjan Murko

I have been arranging an interview with Murko for several months. After several telephone calls and requests, Murko finally agreed to the discussion. As the place of meeting he had chosen the prestigious restaurant of a hotel in Maribor, where he arrived some minutes late, like a celebrity, ordered a coffee and made a joke of the waiter whom he considered to have too serious an expression on his face. At the very beginning he revealed his strategy of appearing in the media and in public, therefore the discussion mostly focused on his skill of creating pseudo-events, which he produces with the help of online networks and video posting portals.⁴⁰

An example of such clips, which has recorded more than 400 thousand views on YouTube since 2007, displays him standing in the middle of the empty stadium in Ljubljana wearing sunglasses and singing the Slovenian anthem. From a music-expert point of view, his singing is quite inaccurate, yet he gives the impression of being very much satisfied with his performance – to the extent, even, that he eventually spreads his arms to greet an imaginary audience. As he explains, he made a special effort to sing the song slightly out of tune. It was clear to him that was the way to provoke the audience, rather than singing the song perfectly. “True, my priority is music,” he commented on that, “but I express myself through gossip because this is my provocative way of appearing in public.” This was also his intention when he asked the singer Saška Lendero to write him the song *Srečen, ker sem moški* (*Happy To Be a Man*), which, as he claims in the eponymous biography, became “a pan-Slovenian hit” and his “trademark”. In the book, he additionally boosted certain events from his private life, thus making the readers have doubts about what was true and what was not. “This is a game and I like this game,” was his answer to the question about why he was creating seeming events and bending reality.

³⁹ *Liking* is a system showing that a Facebook user likes a certain statement, photograph or video clip. It is presented by a thumbs-up image.

⁴⁰ Damjan Murko has also posted on the Internet a series of several-minute clips, in which he explains on behalf of the so-called Star Academy how to create pseudo-events and become a celebrity.

A similar pseudo-event, posted as a clip on YouTube in 2009 and resonating on Facebook, even making it to television news reports, was a fight between Damjan Murko and the members of the music band Rogoški slavčki. The clip shows a member of the band attacking Murko, his blows being intercepted by bodyguards present at the location. Murko then steps on a chair and screams with a shrill voice at the cameraman: "What's up with you? Stop filming! Out, I said out!" He also addresses the attacker, saying, "Who are you anyway? You're a nobody!" The viewer realizes quickly that the event was staged and directed, but it has still (or maybe just because of that) attracted dozens of thousands of views and kept resonating in online networks and media for months.

It is interesting though, that Murko has refused to participate in reality shows that were aired on a commercial TV station. His "official" explanation to the media was that he didn't want to be seen as a farmer, completely untidy and sweaty, and he was also afraid of cows.⁴¹ Actually, he mostly rejected the invitation because he would have to be constantly "exposed" to the public. He would thus have to show his individual self at least partly, and this would make his "mask fall off".

During the conversation, Damijan Murko kept making it clear that everything he does and publishes has to be considered with reservation. What we see, is primarily a mask and an artificially created character whom he is redefining over and over again. "When I come home and the doors to my house close," he explains, "there is again another Damjan Murko." In a completely Goffman's manner he then explained that he called his private world "the life behind the curtain". Outside of his home, however, he always wears a mask and plays the role he has been creating for more than a decade.

Conclusion

There is much difference in the stories of four bubble celebrities presented in the article. For Fredi Miler it was more of a coincidence to have rise to fame based on the video that spread over the Internet, and he never completely reconciled himself to his own unexpected fame and recognisability. Artur Štern had spent several years developing the character of a bohemian drunkard until he finally got lost in it. The recognisability of Urška Hočevar Čepin is largely based on her spectacular outward experience, which however is not static but keeps modifying constantly. Despite having an amoeboid appearance, however, each new "version" confirms that she can create pseudo-events by her very appearance, thus affirming her public image. The case of Damjan Murko might be the most obvious example of how an individual can exploit modern information and communication means to create a celebrity status that is not even apparent, but only pre-prepared and staged, in short, "instant". In "the society of the spectacle"⁴² and the

⁴¹ Simšič and Scheicher 2009.

⁴² Debord 1999.

world of “simulacra”,⁴³ it is obviously no longer required to possess either heroic deeds or a special talent to achieve the celebrity status. Usually it suffices for the person to be able to create events and launch them in public at an appropriate moment in time.

All the four bubble celebrities, however, share an important common feature: all have made use of the new information and communication technology to boost their own statuses. They have even acquired a double role in online networks. On the one hand they are creating pseudo-events, on the other hand they are passing them on to make their more passive *followers* or *friends* notice them, and thus affirm their social role. Having established many connections on online networks, bubble celebrities have thus taken up the position of *hubs* and intermediaries of information on the way to observers (Figure 6). Bubble celebrities are therefore both the subjects and objects of celebrity engagement. It is in their self-referentiality and self-affirmation of their own statuses that the activity and passivity are intertwined. If we consider the actor-network theory, as argued by Bruno Latour and other authors,⁴⁴ bubble celebrities are the players that weave the network, with the pseudo-events they create being the “yarn” of which it is made.

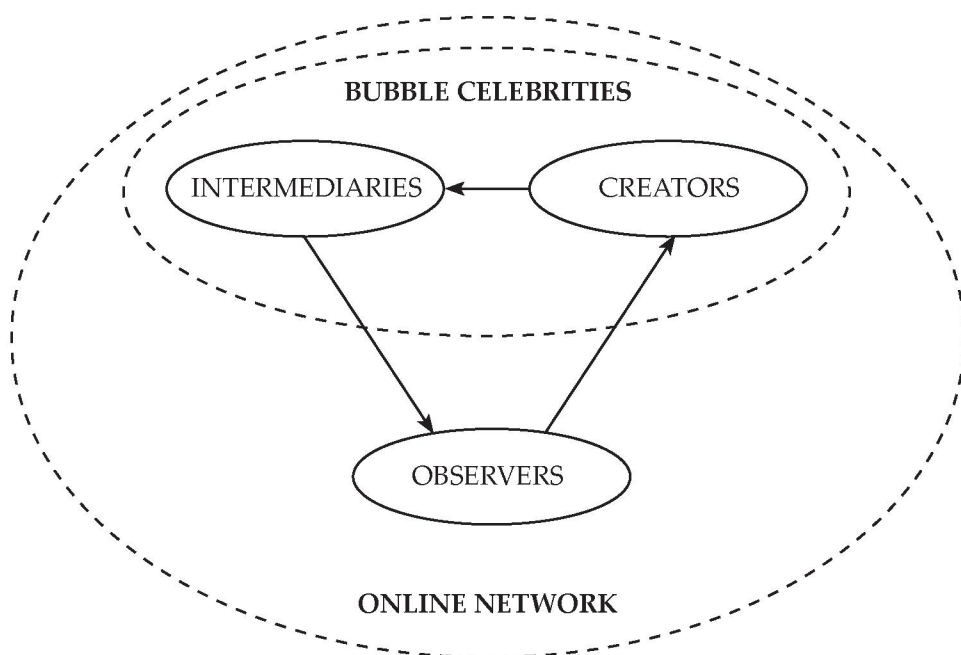


Fig. 6: A representation of the double role of bubble celebrities in an online network.

43 Baudrillard 1999.

44 Latour 2005. See e.g. Law and Hassard 2007.

It is also noteworthy that bubble celebrities connect with each other into a kind of a rhisomatic structure.⁴⁵ That is to say, they keep appearing in the same magazines and reality shows, getting married among themselves and getting divorced, planting gossip on each other to try to slander each other, while at the same time preserving the mutual level of mediocrity. In cases of all the bubble celebrities presented, however, it can be noticed that it is among their ways of self-defining to establish differences between themselves and other celebrities with whom they supposedly have nothing in common. As usually they do not have a basis of sufficient solidity and grip to define them, they base their identity on *différance*, i.e. simultaneous differentiation and deferral of meanings as described by Derrida.⁴⁶ He explains that the signifier does not have its own strictly defined signified, as the latter is rather defined by contextual differences in a network of meanings.

Being a bubble celebrity, therefore, means to stand out in the mediocrity, but at the same time remain part of the network that defines such an individual, supports and feeds them with attention, and maintains their special status. That is why online networks are particularly important in the creation and affirmation of the (seeming) fame as they enable certain people to ensure their self-promotion effectively, even if that is the only thing they do day after day. Boorstin's claim that bubble celebrities are only known for their well-knownness is therefore not completely true. Their fame is based on them artfully making use of online social capital and of the networks that have been created with new technologies. And this certainly is a special skill or even talent.

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45 Cf. Deleuze and Guattari 1990, 2004.

46 Derrida 1998.

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Fig. 1. Paris Hilton regularly updates her followers on the Twitter online social network about what she is doing and where she is (source: Twitter, 2012).



Fig. 2. Fredi Miler rose to fame in 2004 with the music video, which spread over the Internet quickly (photo: Dan Podjed, Mežica, 2011).



Fig. 3. Artur Štern became a master in staging the character of a bohemian intellectual combined with a village eccentric (photo: Dan Podjed, Miklavž na Dravskem polju, 2011).



Fig. 4. Urška Hočevnar Čepin first ensured her self-promotion with an (auto)biography, and then with constant media appearances and participation on online social networks (source: Facebook, 2014).



Fig. 5. The self-proclaimed "Nightingale of Slovenia" Damjan Murko is a master of self-promotion who has been succeeding for a decade to conceal his privacy from the public (photo: Tobias Žižek, 2011).

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